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THE  
BREAKING POINT  

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ANNIE AUSTIN FLINT



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**GEORGE SAVIDGE**

# **THE Breaking Point**

**A NOVEL**

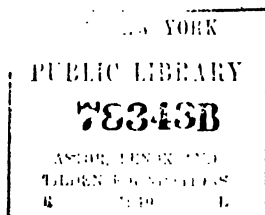
**BY**

**ANNIE AUSTIN FLINT**

Frontispiece by  
Dora Wheeler Keith

**1915  
BROADWAY PUBLISHING CO.  
835 BROADWAY,  
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**PROLOGUE**  
**I—III.**



*"Specific change must be, above all, due to the action of an organism's innermost life: that is to say, it must be a result of a process of psychogenesis."*—MIVART.





## PREFACE

*Works of fiction without number treat of the extraordinary adventures in dual personality of their heroes. I hasten, therefore, to disclaim any originality for that portion of this book. Nothing in the case of George Savidge is invented by me. Doctor Morton Prince's well-known study of "A Dissociated Personality" has parallels for all that is strange and abnormal in my hero's pitiful plight. In Doctor Prince's work, see pp. 329, 332, 338, 359, concerning dreams; pp. 234, 235, on somnambulism; pp. 152, 256, 260, on speaking in a foreign tongue disused since childhood and forgetting one's own language; pp. 200, 201 on applying for work as waiter in a restaurant while in the condition known as "ambulatory automatism"; p. 289 on being readily affected by alcohol. Also, in the Journal of the American Medical Association for December 14, 1901, is published the record of a case reported by Doctor Edward E. Mayer, of one Charles W——, who, as the result of shock, woke after seventeen years to find himself married and the father of four children.*

*The cure, too, of George Savidge is entirely possible. Though rare, his case is well authenticated in the annals of psychiatry, and no psychiatrist will say that his return to normal consciousness, with a complete restoration to health, could not have happened. Hence this book is divided into "histories,"*

*as they are known to scientific men, and not into the customary book parts of a novel; for, alas! my hero does not take up his life work nor behave in the least like a hero till the closing chapters.*

*I have pitted George Savidge against a woman of ungovernable primitive passions, but I hold Doctor Savidge, the physician, to blame for the misery that came to Rosa Kreppel. George's father knew what he should have done to restrain the young man, keeping him under surveillance while he was abnormal, and his father would not. Indeed, save to himself, the father would not admit the son's condition. My novel aims to show the effect of an abnormal human being on his accidental environment; the frightful havoc that was wrought by his daily association with ignorant normal human beings socially not of his class. George Savidge could not be explained to Rosa Kreppel; in sickness and in health he could never have been understood by either Rosa or her people.*

ANNIE AUSTIN FLINT.

New York, April, 1915.

# The Breaking Point

## CHAPTER I.

### MUSIC WITH THE SPRING RAINS.

Diana gave the mare her head.

"Home, Rosinante!" she said. "It's glorious—simply glorious! But it's getting late and uncle'll be worried. That's a good horse—home!"

Rosinante obeyed. Struggling up a hillside, ankle-deep in mud among naked trees that shivered in groaning when twisted by the wind, was an outing to appeal more to mistress than to horse. Rosinante liked a stiff gallop in fine weather. In a storm she preferred her stable.

But Diana was different. At all seasons of the year she loved the country, while her allegiance to the beautiful did not lessen her delight in days of bleak ugliness. In the cold stinging rains of early spring, with the roads almost impassable from mud, Miss Vaughan found riding an exhilarating exercise. Slender though she was, her physical endurance was great. She could outride her uncle Will. Neither Charlotte nor George Savidge could compete with her, and she felt flattered that young Savidge was anxious when she went out alone in

bad weather. Occasionally, the young man accompanied his "cousin." He did so under protest; for he loved beauty and shrank from ugliness in any form—even in its manifestations of strength that charmed Diana. As Miss Vaughan cantered up the driveway to the house she heard the piano. The boy was feverishly playing Chopin, and the girl smiled, wondering if, like a certain gifted Frenchwoman who revelled in great storms, she, also, should find her poet-musician in torment on her account. The conceit pleased her. As she glided into the room in her wet habit, smiling a dripping radiance, she met George's reproachful eyes above the music-rack and blushed for the first time in an encounter with a member of her adopted family.

"When under the sun did you get back?" he asked from behind the sheltering pages of the most beautiful of the nocturnes and kept on playing.

"There's no sun. Don't you know it's after dark and raining?" she retorted demurely.

"Wait till I'm through with this. I can't bear to break off in the middle of a phrase. Oh, Di," he said when he had wrung the final sob from his instrument, "how can you! You're always staying out late, courting danger at this beastly time of year. You don't care that I'm made wretched."

"Are you wretched when you play like that?"

"Yes."

"Then be wretched," she said softly, letting her hand fall to his shoulder. "It helps in music, in poetry—in everything in art. Poor boy!"

"Don't Diana!" He, too, blushed, shrinking sensitively from her touch. "I'm not a boy. I'm as old as you—very nearly. A month or so shouldn't



count. When you're as much older as you pretend to be, you'll regret it."

"No, I sha'n't!"

She laughed, pleased with her success in teasing him. The satisfaction robbed her of coquetry, substituting the purely boyish banter that spells good fellowship.

"Don't let's quarrel," she said. "We sha'n't, of course—yet it's fun to see how near one can get to the danger line with you, George. You shouldn't be sensitive about your youth. Who cares! I like you as you are—particularly at the piano."

"Aren't you going to change your things?" He spoke in an odd choked voice. "You're drenched, Di."

"That depends," she said coolly, sitting down. "Shall you play again?"

He closed the piano.

"Not to-night. I've been at it for hours. How long were you away?"

On a sudden she became serious, leaning forward to answer with charming candor, "I don't know. But I didn't go for a ride in the rain to alarm anybody. You mayn't believe it, I wanted to think—to be alone, out of the house and away from the servants and my duty. You won't laugh, George, if I tell you something?"

She left her seat. Again she laid her hand on his shoulder, looking round the room as if fearful to be overheard.

"Aunt Emma isn't well enough for petty house-keeping annoyances, and Charlotte might be nervous. You're only a boy—I beg pardon!—a man who is young in experience of domestic crises, so I

went to uncle Will. Can you believe it? He was frightened. He turned pale when I told."

"What?"

Still she temporized.

"It's too absurd! I can't believe any such nonsense. Yet I'd like to see if you'll be as worried as uncle was. I can't keep a woman servant in the house, George. The men are sensible. They're around the stables and at work in the garden, and don't have to sleep under this particular roof at night, so they swear they haven't seen anything wrong and laugh at the maids. I thought that if I told uncle he'd be amused. He doesn't think it insignificant."

"What?"

Diana pursed her pretty mouth to whisper:

"Ghosts!"

The young man shouted with laughter so infectiously wholesome that Diana's seriousness gave way. When she could control herself to speak, she said:

"How can you be frivolous! To lose servants at the distance that we are from town is no laughing matter."

"I know it isn't a laughing matter to lose servants, but to think of your condescending to treat with ghosts is too funny, Di! You'll have to own it's funny."

The divine mood in which he had interpreted Chopin was gone. He looked, now, like the normal young man of twenty-three, or thereabouts, amused at the normal young woman's quite feminine weakness. His air of masculine superiority irritated Diana.

"Are you the ghost? Would you play that childish trick to terrorize a bunch of ignorant women and call it 'fun'?" she asked with contempt.

He crossed his heart.

"On my honor, I wouldn't! Don't lose your temper, Di. I'm as much in the dark as you. But you can't lay ghosts and keep the servants by taking crazy rides 'cross country, giving the impression you're off your head yourself. I don't follow your line of reasoning—that's all. What about poor old dad?"

"Uncle Will? I haven't the least idea. He's really horribly worried, so go find him and talk while I dress for dinner."

Miss Vaughan was determined to thresh out the matter with her uncle herself; but she wished for time, and so she went thoughtfully into the hall and up the wide shallow stairway to her room in the house that had been her home ever since she could remember. She was the orphaned and only child of Doctor Savidge's dearest friend, and was taken to the doctor's heart when an infant to be brought up in his family where she knew unvarying happiness in the exercise of her own sweet will. Every one adored and almost every one obeyed her. Aunt Emma was an invalid; the housekeeping was, therefore, nominally in Charlotte's hands while practically in Diana's. Charlotte had all she could do to look after her mother. With boundless vitality Diana rode, read, studied, walked with the poets and uncle Will, diverting the old doctor daily, but playing on and mocking at the dreamy, high-strung imaginative son of the house, who would sometimes retaliate in kind but was commonly absorbed in



books and music and stayed much by himself. Was George coming out of his shell, she wondered. Was he at last aware that she, Diana, was grown as well as he and was a highly specialized young woman? Miss Vaughan's weakness was to pose for an ideal creature not half so attractive as her whimsical natural self, and George enjoyed "taking her down," as he had done to-day about the ghosts. Diana did not believe in ghosts. The reports which she heard, however, were strange, and because one does not believe a thing it does not follow that it is fair to laugh at the sufferings of the half-educated or the wholly ignorant who do believe. The two latest maids met her at the head of the stairs.

"We're sorry, Miss Diana; but we can't stay another night in the house. You needn't pay us for the little time we've been here," the spokeswoman declared. Abashed at the young mistress's appearance, the other maid held back.

"Nonsense!" Diana said gaily. "When you mentioned leaving at breakfast I was provoked—naturally. Put yourselves in my place and you'll feel as I did. I've had a fine ride which has done me good. I look, I suppose, like a drowned rat, but it doesn't make me into the ghost you saw last night."

"Oh, no, Miss Diana! No, indeed!" they exclaimed in a breath. "Nothing like it, ma'am! We've no fault to find with you or the place"—the magnanimity of the modern servant showed in this statement—"only——"

Diana curbed her impatience. "Only—? You won't try the place and the family for another night. Perhaps it was the wind."

"No, Miss Diana. There was no wind to speak of."

"Come, then! Prepare my bath and help me dress. While we're busy, we'll discuss it. What train are you taking?"

"The nine-forty, Miss Diana, please."

"To stop at every farmhouse between Schofield Falls and New York? How exceedingly foolish! What should you think of my packing you off on such a night?"

"It isn't raining," one woman ventured timidly to say.

Diana went to her bedroom window and looked out.

"True, it isn't! It's a pitch-black night and the wind hasn't gone down. I'd be more afraid of ghosts out of doors than in. I'm not urging you to stay, remember—only to wait till morning when I'll fill your places."

The women whimpered:

"We can't, Miss Diana. You're a nice young lady to live with, so is Miss Charlotte, Mrs. Savidge, the doctor and the young gentleman are all very nice—there's nothing against the family. The butler and second man, and other gentlemen in the stable—they're most agreeable and pleasant-spoken."

"Every one but the ghost? Isn't he 'pleasant-spoken?' By the by, you haven't told whether it's a man or a woman and I'm curious. I wish I might meet him, her, IT! Ghosts, I believe, are addressed respectfully as IT."

The women crossed themselves.

"We don't know, Miss Diana, for sure. We

weren't close to, and when the doctor came out of his room and spoke, we ran as fast as our legs would carry us. Please, Miss Diana, don't ask us to stay another night! We'd be dead by morning."

Diana was before the mirror at her dressing-table, coiling her hair. She dropped the shining mass from between her hands and turned an amazed face to the women.

"The doctor? Some trick is being played to make him angry." She spoke slowly. "He is horrified, indignant at these goings-on in his house, and doesn't wish to alarm my aunt. You should have told me at once that the doctor caught the practical joker in the act, Mary. You might have saved a deal of trouble."

Mary sniffed incredulously, saying nothing.

"Bring me the embroidered crêpe I wore last evening," Diana commanded. "It's the quickest to get into. And you, Ellen, draw my bath. I'll pay Mary and you for the forty-eight hours' service, and Stanton may take you by motor to the train. I shouldn't keep either of you on any account, though I'm still quite willing that you should wait here till morning."

She looked from one to the other.

"You won't? Very well. So be it! Help make me ready for dinner and you may go as soon as ever you like."

Diana was dressed a quarter of an hour before dinner. She paid the servants, dismissing them; then, finding unexpected time on her hands, she went to her aunt's room for a short visit. In the course of a discreetly ordered invalidism everything that a cultivated woman, with a love of flowers, could

ask to make the four walls of her compulsory retreat a haven of rest for her family, aunt Emma had gathered about her, and on going into that bright room the rule was to leave care outside. Diana entered radiantly. She had no intention of bringing there her dispute with servants for a topic of conversation, and was ready with a gay greeting when the sick woman's expression arrested the words on her lips, changing them to——

"Auntie, what's the matter?"

"I don't know, child. Where are the servants—the house servants? Does trouble in that quarter continue?"

Diana knelt beside the invalid's long chair.

"It does," she said cheerfully, "but it's nothing. What a pity you should have to know when we change! If I could, I'd make them up to look alike, and let you have an unbroken line of Marys or Ellens to wait on you. Everybody's having trouble with servants, every one in the world, auntie. Don't you mind it, dear heart!"

"I don't mind—in the way you think, Diana—only, only, child, why do they go? What reasons do they give you?"

"Why auntie, they—they give no good reason. It's in the air. They come from New York with the idea that they'll like the country and—don't. That's everything I can make out. One gives a lame excuse, the other—er—repeats. They're sheep and they bleat alike. Not many persons care for the country in the spring rains."

"It hasn't been raining so hard before to-day."

"No, and it's clearing now," the girl said, glad of the excuse to talk of the weather. Oh, aunt Emma,

such a ride as I've had! We went to the top of Beech Hill, and Rosinante——"

Mrs. Savidge's thin fingers toyed with the lace on the girl's gown.

"Never mind Rosinante, Diana. Tell me more about the maids. Didn't these two latest say why they're leaving?"

Diana looked at her keenly.

"Are you superstitious, aunt Emma?"

The elder woman's lip quivered.

"Not the least in the world, dear child, but servants are. The house isn't haunted, Diana. There's nothing to harm us."

"So you've heard? Who has told? I'm glad the murder's out," Diana cried. "Did you ever know such nonsense?"

Scrambling to her feet, she drew a chair to the fire for comfort. "Ghosts!" She laughed. "After the exercise that I take, auntie, I sleep shamelessly sound. No ghostly footfall could wake me. Do you hear anything?"

"No child, no! That proves there's nothing to hear; doesn't it? I'm so poor a sleeper—awake most of the night—if there were anything unusual, any strange noises, I should certainly hear them; shouldn't I, Diana?"

Her cheek against the pillow was whiter than the linen it pressed. Her lips were ashen. A wave of pity swept the girl. Couldn't the maids take themselves off without troubling a sick woman? How silly and how cruel! Their senseless gossip spread like wildfire. Diana's young lips settled into a terminated line.

"Aunt Emma," she said, "there's something

wrong. An inhuman—not supernatural—trick is being played, and George and I will ferret out the joker. He sha'n't go unpunished. I don't believe it's a woman. It may be one of the stable boys trying to frighten the maids. I'll call together the entire household and read the riot act. Uncle Will suspects some one; for, evidently, he's furious. I haven't seen Charlotte on the subject, but I mean now to speak out to her, too. This is going too far."

Mrs. Savidge lifted a magazine from her lap and held it to screen her eyes from the dancing firelight.

"You and George will ferret out the—the ghost, Diana? Have you told George, then, and not your uncle and me and Charlotte?"

Diana stood erect. The flame-glow from the hearth played over her beautiful gown but could not light her face, and Mrs. Savidge was unable to see her features distinctly. The girl's voice, however, sounded gaily natural.

"Yes, I told George. This morning I was so exasperated that I spoke to uncle Will and annoyed him. I could see as much. George wasn't told till a little while ago—after I came in from my ride. He laughed at me. Both he and I howled hysterically."

The magazine slipped from Mrs. Savidge's grasp. It fell to the floor, striking the fender and barely escaped the fire. Miss Vaughan stooped with a swooping grace to return it.

"Be careful, aunt Emma! Shall I switch on the lights, or had you rather stay quiet in the dark till your tray is brought? I'll wait here with you."

"No, darling! Leave me as I am and go down to the dining-room. I prefer the dark; my head aches.

So you told George and he laughed? I shouldn't have dared tell. I'm thankful, though, you did it."

The immense relief in her tone did not escape Diana's ears. The girl's face softened, growing pitifully tender. She bent over to kiss the invalid.

"Did you believe that George wouldn't laugh? Poor auntie! Lying shut up here alone magnifies horrors. Why didn't you tell me that you knew and I'd have laughed with you, first, and with George afterward? The only one of us who doesn't think it a joke is uncle Will, and I'll make it amusing at dinner. He should see the ridiculous, not the irritating, side, which he can do, if—like me—he'll turn his thoughts entirely from the servant problem."

## CHAPTER II.

### PROPINQUITY AND GHOSTS.

Throughout dinner, Diana and George were more than usually talkative. The young man put aside his preoccupation and devoted himself good-naturedly to his father. Charlotte was a shy little mouse always, but Doctor Savidge had a genial temper. He liked talk. In the small happenings of his household he took keen interest, but to-night he was morose. He brooded. As the young people took their seats at table, the look of understanding that was flashed between his son and his ward plainly distressed him.

"Uncle Will shouldn't have caught us," Diana told herself, "his construction of it is wrong. Does he imagine there's anything stronger than cousinly feeling?" She tossed her head. If George is more civil than a brother it's only because he's growing up. He can't be forever in leading-strings, and he knows I'm not Charlotte. A cousin by courtesy isn't the same as a sister—young or old. If uncle Will thinks me a mere flirt——"

She sat very erect and, with hot cheeks, talked



greater nonsense than at the beginning of the meal. The old man showed his increased distress; the young fellow his increasing enjoyment and admiration. If Diana were trying to attract George she was succeeding astonishingly fast. Even Charlotte opened dove's eyes of amazed innocence as the fun went on, and was frightened when George proposed a glass of wine with his father and Doctor Savidge, white-lipped and stern, ordered the butler to remove the decanters. Immediately, however, the impulse of host and gentleman controlled the man.

"Excuse me, my boy," he said penitently, "I've things on my mind and won't drink. Let them clear the table and we'll have coffee in your den or the library—whichever place you say. I didn't mean to show it, but I'm confoundedly irritable to-night." He turned to Diana. "What you told me this morning, child, worries me. Come to the library without Charlotte and George, and we'll talk it over."

He left his seat, and taking his ward's face between his hands kissed her affectionately.

"Go on with your ghost story, Di, I didn't hear the end. 'The new chambermaid, at two in the morning, seeing the apparition, ran screaming down the hall,' and then—what happened?"

Charlotte did not overhear. He spoke in a playful low tone which could not reach George, standing with his back turned at the further end of the room, where he was coaxing a lazy staghound to sit up and beg for sugar. Why did uncle Will whisper his commonplace little pleasantry? Was he afraid to frighten George as well as Charlotte?

"I'll go, of course," Diana answered, smiling.

Lovingly she squeezed the hand that trembled against her arm. "I want a special talk with you, uncle Will. Let's sneak off to the library before the others see. We don't care for coffee, you and I. Now's our chance. Come, quick!"

Once in the library—dear familiar room!—a discussion of ghosts and servants seemed profanation. Solid learning looked down from rows on rows of scientific books. A generous wall expanse was covered by polite literature, while, in Doctor Savidge's alcove, where his favorite chair and table stood, the works of scientific writers in many languages rose from floor to ceiling.

"The answer to all mysteries," whimsically Diana thought, "must be right here—if only one knew how to read one's particular answer! It's possible to get from books no more than the mind can assimilate, and so it must be with critical thinking outside of books. If uncle Will would give his mind to the analysis of the epidemic of hysteria affecting the maids"—she was glad the butler and the useful man kept their heads—"it might be possible to put to those women, clearly and simply, the reasonable explanation of their fright.

"*'La Contagion Mentale,'*" she read aloud, taking the volume from the nearest shelf. "This may explain it. Two maids are leaving us to-night, uncle Will. Before I find others, wouldn't it be wise to collect the outdoor servants, and the few that I can gather indoors—thank heaven, the cook stays!—and make them a reassuring speech based on information from this writer? Let me cram for a moment."

She was very charming, standing, volume in hand,

much in earnest, with her fine air of intellectuality making the atmosphere rarefied about her. It was an attractive picture—the modish young girl familiarly turning the pages of the weighty book, and she knit her brows in a perplexity of doubt only lest she might fail to make inferior minds see truth—not that she herself might miss it. Doctor Savidge's expression softened to fond pride.

"Sit down, my dear, and don't bother your pretty head with ghosts. They're not worth it. That isn't what worries me, Diana."

He drew his favorite lounging chair to the fire, and seated himself with his feet stretched to the blaze. Taking a cigar from a box that the butler placed temptingly at hand, he made ready to smoke. He looked tired and suddenly old, as the well-preserved can look on the days that life goes hard with them. Ordinarily, Doctor William Schofield Savidge was a man of imposing presence. Serenely thoughtful student eyes looked from under a fine brow leniently on the world. He had the head of a scholar, and was as well known in Europe as in America. His son resembled him physically, with the difference that George Savidge inherited his mother's delicate frame, while the old physician was sturdily built. Although George had never had a sick day that Diana could remember, his father was often concerned for his health. Was it so always with an only son? The young fellow was humored in being allowed to shut himself in his room for days together, ostensibly to compose music, to paint and to study, and at such times he would receive no one but his father. George liked being made much of. He was reticent and intensely affectionate.

The bond between his father and him was strong. Where he found music and other beauty he was happy; books added to his sum of pleasure; yet—and yet——

“What worries you, uncle Will?” Diana asked gently. “Anything about George, or is it aunt Emma? I did my best not to have this silly talk of ghosts reach auntie, but couldn’t prevent it. Some one has let it out to her—perhaps, while I was selfishly off riding. Are you very angry—really—and think you can’t forgive me? But you can. Only try!”

“I am trying, dear. Since you’ve been with me here in the library I have forgiven. It isn’t you who are at fault, child. It is Nature speaking through you.”

Diana flushed.

“What do you mean, uncle?”

“Don’t you know you’re a beautiful woman?”

She paled a little.

“Has that anything to do with your distress?”

“Yes, Di.”

He smoked for a few moments in silence; then went on:

“It has to do with my boy. No, no; don’t interrupt! As I said before, it isn’t your fault. I’m not such an old fool as to bring you in here to scold you for being lovely. I’ve been worried about it for months; I ought to have worried on any day of the past two or three years. But, Diana”—he put out his hand with yearning tenderness, drawing her to him—“Di, my little girl, Dick Vaughan’s daughter, I’ve pretended you weren’t grown, because, dear, I didn’t wish to see you with George’s eyes. I

wanted you to stay a child always, and I should have sent you to school away from us to let you become—yourself; should have given you your chance, Di, and my boy, too, his chance. It's this cursed propinquity that's to blame in boy-and-girl love affairs. You're not brother and sister. It's wicked to have thrown you together as though you were, and it's all my fault—and Nature's. The boy is in love with you, Diana."

She held her head proudly.

"If he were? I don't admit it, uncle Will—not for a moment, you understand? But if he were, can you accuse me of harming him? I'm not unworthy of his affection. I don't say that I want it; but it wouldn't be wrong of him to offer and of me to accept—not a *mésalliance*. I'm not the penniless orphan one reads of in novels, nor inferior to him socially."

"Good God, no! You, Dickie Vaughan's—Richard Livingston Vaughan's and Phoebe Pruyn Schuyler's daughter, socially an inferior? You're the best blood in the country and the sweetest girl in the world!"

"Then why should you object to the—the possible relationship?" She tried to be saucy but failed through embarrassment. "George isn't lovesick. It's a false alarm, uncle Will."

He shook an obstinately wise head.

"I've watched the boy. He knows when you enter the room—feels before he sees you. When you're not looking I've surprised his eyes—worshipping hungry young eyes—fastened on you, following your every motion. It's a natural passion but has no business to bury its fangs in him unawares."

The father groaned, covering his eyes with his hand.

"It's not fair to the boy nor to you, child. You're the only woman with whom George has been thrown intimately, and of course he has grown to care."

Diana bit her lip.

"What a horrid way you put it! George, you think, would have cared—er—like that for any girl, not his sister, brought up with him as I've been?"

"I think that he would. Don't let vanity crop up, Di. He's no more nor less than a man and a very young man, with no experience of the world and women."

Vanity cropped up.

"You believe that he cares for me only because he's a very young man and I'm the one woman he has seen intimately? It sounds brutal, uncle—if true. I don't believe it."

She was silent; then, passionately, she cried out, while blushes dyed her forehead and cheeks, even to her throat. "It's almost an insult to George and me! Why speak of such things? I'll never know another happy moment with him."

"Because, Diana, you, being the woman, ought to know—ought to understand how much depends on you. You say you haven't harmed the boy—granted! I doubt if you have, but take care lest you do! On his part I believe it's puppy love, and he may recover or may not. But at his time of life it's a very serious thing—with or without recovery. At present, you are his ideal woman. Play with him and you degrade womanhood. It depends on his first love whether his next is for a good woman or a bad."

Her head bowed lower and lower till it rested on the back of Doctor Savidge's chair. With her forehead against the cool leather and her face quite hidden, she asked:

"Suppose that he shouldn't love again? Suppose that I—after long years, I mean, uncle Will, when he and I have been more in the world and he's had his chance with other women, hateful things!—suppose that I should happen to care?" She gave a laugh that was half a sob. "Should you find me so—so utterly objectionable?"

She could not see the face that Doctor Savidge turned round at her. Pity, dread, stiffened his muscles till he could with difficulty move his lips to answer. Inwardly he was praying: "O God, not that! Spare the child! Spare me both children! Grant that they may not suffer by each other! I'll appeal to her to go away. She must never know; must not be broken-hearted by knowledge of what I may yet have power to change. I'll send for Connelly in the morning; take advice; do whatever he says is best, and cease opposing him in anything—anything that Connelly thinks ought to be. I've let it go for too long! O my God, I've let it go!"

"Listen, Diana."

His voice sounded strange to his own ears but apparently it was not, for Diana gave no sign.

"I wish you to go away, dear, to give George his—chance. He mustn't think of you, now—not, maybe, for several years to come, and he can't help thinking of you when he sees you constantly, Diana."

He passed his hand wearily across his forehead. Like his face, the hand had aged. It was no longer

the firm kind prop that his children knew. Wrinkled and old, it shook as if palsied.

"I can't expect you to understand while I speak in riddles, I know; but will you trust me, not understanding? Will you go away for a little while? In a day or two, as soon as you can make ready, to visit some friend? It breaks my heart losing you even temporarily, my darling."

"Why should I go away?"

Her voice was muffled. With a laugh, then, defiantly affectionate, she threw herself into his arms.

"We are worried over nothing—absolutely nothing! Believe me, uncle, it's the ghost upsetting the entire house, and I shall grub to unearth the ghost and punish it. George isn't anything to me but your son and my adopted cousin, so I sha'n't lower his ideal of womanhood. Please don't insist that I go away! Who'd run the house? Not Charlotte, single-handed, for what would become of aunt Emma? You wouldn't have a hired housekeeper! It's been such fun to manage the blessed old place ourselves! A housekeeper wouldn't fit in—we're all too queer. How you'd dislike her! As for George's precious ideal of womanhood, I sha'n't disturb the lady on her pedestal an iota—not an iota, dearest; I sha'n't even dust under her—so there! What more can you ask? You'll have your boy and you'll have—me! It's a case of eating your cake and having it—you know that it is! I refuse to be serious—in deadly melodramatic earnest about ghosts and young lovers—particularly as the gentleman you mention hasn't opened his lips to make love to me. Why, uncle Will, the supposition is indecent! What an awful mess you've made, trying



to take time by the forelock and give me 'straight talk,' when a woman would have known it was wisest not to say one word! Wouldn't aunt Emma scold you if she knew! Now, you want to turn me out of the house. Sir!"

She threw back her head and looked at him, stamped her pretty foot and tremulously laughed, tears meanwhile running down her cheeks.

"Sir, I won't go! You'll have to evict me—turn me out, neck and crop, and that you wouldn't do to any woman. Still, I'll forgive, and hug and kiss you—just to show how magnanimous I am!"

She suited the action to the word.

"There! Aren't you sorry you behaved badly, making a mess? Good night, dearest, good night! Truly, I don't care for the ghost any more than you care; but I sha'n't have you say you don't want *me* in the house! That cuts. You didn't mean it, and you've made a mess of whatever it is you did mean; but I've forgiven you and won't take you at your word and go—not much! Keep me under lock and key in my own room, if you've the heart—otherwise you don't get rid of me. Good night!"

She ran from the room. Doctor Savidge, left alone by the fire, bowed his head on his arm, moaning softly, for fear that she should hear him and come back.

"Yes, I've made a mess of it. Things couldn't be worse. I should have held my tongue, should have seen Connelly before I spoke, should have done—God knows what! The fact remains that—George cares."

He lifted his face. It was wet with tears.

"She knows, bless her! And she's on the road to

caring—perhaps, already there! I don't want my boy to suffer, yet I've let this thing drift till there's nothing else for it. We shall have to make a sharp break, and he will suffer."

His son's eyes rose before him pleading, boyishly brave.

"There's no help for it. George cares."

## CHAPTER III.

### THE PROLOGUE CLOSES.

Blinded by tears, Diana was rushing across the hall from the library to hide herself in her own room, when in passing the music-room at the foot of the stairs the door was suddenly jerked open and George blocked her path.

"What is it?" He turned white. "Something has happened, Di? Father? Is he ill in there alone in the library? Tell me at once. No; I'll see for myself."

Diana held him back.

"Don't go! Nothing has happened. I—I'm not well, so I'm hurrying off to bed early. I didn't care to have you see me. Uncle Will and I've been talking."

"Di!! You've discovered the ghost."

He seized her by the elbows and firmly held her while she struggled.

"It isn't fair not to tell me. You've got to play fair," he said. "You do, you know, and I expect it. Who frightened you?"

"Nobody—nothing! Let me go, please, George—please!"

In her struggle to escape, her hair was disar-

ranged and a lock brushed his cheek. Instantly he released her.

"I beg your pardon! I've no right to keep you against your will. Good night, Diana."

"Nobody wants me!" she cried with the pathetic unreason of the spoilt child. "Uncle Will has just now told me to go away. I can't understand him. If he's tired of me, I suppose I ought to go."

"What do you mean? Dad has told you to go away—dad?"

The choked intensity of his tone quickened her heartbeats.

"Yes, he has told me to go, but for only a little while. I'm sure that he'll miss me and want me back, and I'll come. He has something on his mind, dear old uncle. If I'm not here, he'll see more clearly that I—I'm part of his life and my place is with him—like Charlotte. Some ridiculous notion that he has in his head"—she blushed crimson—"will go when I go. If I've the sense to behave better than I did to-night at dinner, it won't return with me. Oh, but I'm sorry!"

George stared at her still with incredulity so great that he doubted she was speaking.

"The strangest thing!" he said. "Queerest day I've passed in my life! This talk of ghosts; of servants leaving; you off on a mad ride on purpose to give yourself the pleasure of tormenting me; and now dad, of all persons, pitching into you, telling you to go away, Diana!"

Her eyes swam in tears.

"You're not going, Di?"

"I thought not. Perhaps I'd better."

"How about—me?"

"You?"

"Yes. Do you think, Di, I'll let you go? That ride this afternoon—the hours you were out in the storm and I was playing Chopin—taught me something. I'll never let you go again—never! I'll chain you to my heart."

George! George!"

"Don't be angry. For God's sake, don't laugh at me, Di! Be angry, if you like, instead. I didn't mean to speak. Dad has precipitated it. What does he mean by sending you away? Where is he sending you?"

Diana backed against the wall. With her hands clasped unconsciously over her heart, she stared at him through round, frightened eyes.

"He isn't sending me—really. I'm going of my own accord on a visit to some friends."

"What friends?"

She did not answer.

"Poor Di! Didn't you know, couldn't you guess my feelings, dear? We're not brother and sister, but it's a blessed apprenticeship to have served. At least, you know me!"

"I—don't—know—you."

He came eagerly near, but did not touch her. "Yes, you do, Di—yes! If you insist, I'm the one who should go away. Do you think we should be separated? It's for me to leave the house—not you. Has dad guessed? Does he know?"

"Oh!" Diana cried, "there's some secret about me; something uncle Will knows to make him feel that I shouldn't stay. He ought to be quite frank and tell it. I sha'n't listen to you. You mustn't say a word before I've learned what uncle Will has

in his mind. Do you know anything, George, against my father and mother?"

"Impossible! Remember how dad speaks of them, Diana."

She sighed. "Yes, he loved them; didn't he—loved both? He loves me, you, and——"

George interrupted her. "I love you, Diana."

"You mustn't say so—mustn't think it, even! Wait. I'll speak again to uncle. Come with me and we'll speak together. Wait only till to-morrow!"

"‘To-morrow never comes.’ He's there in the library now. Let me speak to-night," the young fellow urged. "You love me, but you haven't said so. Only say you love me and I'll wait—a week. Anyhow, till to-morrow. Say it, Diana."

He moved to take her into his arms. Quick as a flash she eluded him, darting up the stairs.

"Good night!" she called. "Good night! There's time enough till to-morrow. Time to think over this nonsense and find out if really you care, or if it's—‘puppy love.’ You're very young, George, and I'm not a decrepit old woman experienced in affairs of the heart. Do be sensible! Please! It's only till to-morrow!"

He laughed.

"Good night. Sleep, if you can—I defy you! But you don't leave this house, Di, ‘unbeknownst’ to me! I give fair warning. If you go, I go."

She leaned far over the balustrade of the upper hall.

"Sssshh! You'll wake everybody. Don't you know we're in the country and it's ten o'clock at night?"

"Is it? I'm going back to the music room to play till morning."

"If you do, it'll be selfish. Think of aunt Emma."

"You're right, dearest, and I'm a selfish brute. I'll lie awake to dream of you."

A door creaked discreetly somewhere upstairs, and Diana flew. She would not for the world face Charlotte or have the servants know that she was bandying love-words with the young master of the house. She ran straight to her room, closed and bolted the door against Charlotte's possible intrusion for a hair-brushing chat, and threw herself into an easy chair. Her tears were dried. From head to foot she was tingling with the delicious excitement of finding herself loved where she had momentarily felt slighted—humiliated. Doctor Savidge could not have better played into his son's hands. An undefined emotion, a passion quite in the air, he had crystalized into fact. Had some servant spied on George and her? Diana wondered. The two maids were gone. She remembered that there was now no servant in that part of the house. The cook and the kitchen maid slept in the wing above the kitchen. If aunt Emma should want anything during the night she would ring either for Charlotte, whose room communicated with her mother's, for her husband, or for Diana further along the hall. George's room, in another wing, communicated directly with Doctor Savidge's dressing-room.

"Auntie is safe. She can't have been disturbed," the girl thought. "As for Charlotte? Who cares! She'll know in the morning."

Diana then gave herself over to dreams. Noiselessly undressing, she slipped into bed, and between waking and sleeping, lay endeavoring drowsily to recall the tones of her lover's voice and the love-light in his eyes. In a way, uncle Will was right. George's ideal of her must not be shattered. She knew the young man's poetic temperament and that it would go hard with him should she fail to keep to the impossible standard he raised. But she knew no fear. Young girls cannot know fear of themselves—however timid they may be with regard to other people and to things affecting their personality. In this respect Miss Vaughn was a very young girl. Her twenty-three years, passed almost entirely in the country, had not aged her soul. Her head might be compared to a sectional bookcase filled with excellently chosen works that cultivated but did not educate her. Rather, she was a garden, intelligently planned, weeded lovingly by her uncle's hands, and now in the shy bloom of an exquisite youth, boasting many a rare blossoming plant impossible to have grown in unfavorable soil. Still, who speaks of a garden, however brilliant, as "educated"? Diana Vaughan, in the full acceptance of the term, was a highly cultivated garden-variety of young woman.

When George Savidge went to bed that night he as sedulously avoided disturbing his father by any noise as Diana avoided disturbing Charlotte. With plans teeming in his brain he fell asleep. The plans were:

(1) To assert his manhood and not allow his father to turn Diana from the house, because the old doctor could not sanction their immediate mar-



riage; (2) as a gentleman, to offer to go himself and start in business, not to be known merely for his father's son, a dreamer, the ordinary rich young man living in idleness on money that his father had accumulated through early hard work and brains. What he, George, would do in business he could not decide. He saw Diana's eyes, in her bewitching flower-like face aglow with color, dance on page after page of the imaginary ledgers opened in his mind. A commonplace stockbroker would not be worthy of Diana. A bank clerk was a beginning too low to be considered. The son of a long line of professional men naturally had the trade instinct wanting. Was it too late to study law or medicine? Could he distinguish himself as a musician, as a painter? Certainly, it was too late to earn by any profession a competency that might gratify his eager young impatience to support a wife as Diana should be supported. He fell asleep turning the matter over.

Next morning Diana woke late. The household must have overslept, she thought, when on raising herself on her elbow to consult her watch she saw that it was nine o'clock. The stillness of early morning enwrapped the house. The sun gleamed through flowered chintz curtains that no maid had drawn aside to let in the full daylight. There was, of course, no maid for those morning duties. Diana sprang out of bed, reproaching herself for not having been awake when Charlotte had gone, as was customary, to help the invalid. A presentiment that something unusual was to occur stirred Miss Vaughan unpleasantly. Then she remembered what had happened, and though alone she blushed rosy

red. Whom should she confide in first—aunt Emma, uncle Will or Charlotte? Aunt Emma and Charlotte, united in her favor, might soften uncle Will. The experiment was worth trying. She hummed a tune in going about her toilet, chose her most becoming frock, and tried several different ways of dressing her hair. As she was taking down the beautiful wavy mass for the fifth or sixth time to twist it up again, a faint knock sounded at her door. She drew the bolt. "Come in," she said impatiently, but as distinctly as she could with her mouth filled with hairpins. "Come in, Charlotte. I know it's you, and I'm dreadfully sorry to be late." She turned again to the mirror, saw Charlotte's reflection, and dropping her hands stood aghast.

"Merciful heavens, what's the matter?"

Charlotte's face was swollen with weeping. She was dressed in only a loose wrapper over her night gown. Her hair hung in disorder on her shoulders. She looked as if she had been up all night.

"Go to father in the library immediately. He wants you," she said, "but don't go to mother till she asks. Oh, Di, George—George!"

Diana put her hand over her heart.

"George? Quick—tell me! Has anything happened to George?"

"His bed was slept in," Charlotte sobbed. "His clothes—all the little personal things—are in their places in his room. Only the clothing that he wears every day is gone. He hasn't taken even his jewelry—not his watch, Diana."

She staggered to a chair and sat down.

"He must have dressed, Di, and have gone of his own accord, not leaving a note—not a line or

message anywhere that we can find. He has simply disappeared."

Diana held to the edge of her dressing-table to keep from falling.

"George," she repeated blankly, "has disappeared? Are you sure, Charlotte? Are you quite, quite sure you're making no mistake? Not a word, not a message for—for me, Charlotte, nor for uncle Will? Are you sure that he isn't up early, walking somewhere on the place, or that he hasn't gone for a ride or a long walk? What does uncle think of it? What does he say? Uncle Will——?"

"He wants you in the library." Charlotte sobbed harder. "The blow may kill him. As for mother—poor mother! Oh, Diana, have you the least suspicion of what may have become of George? Do you believe that the—the ghost——"

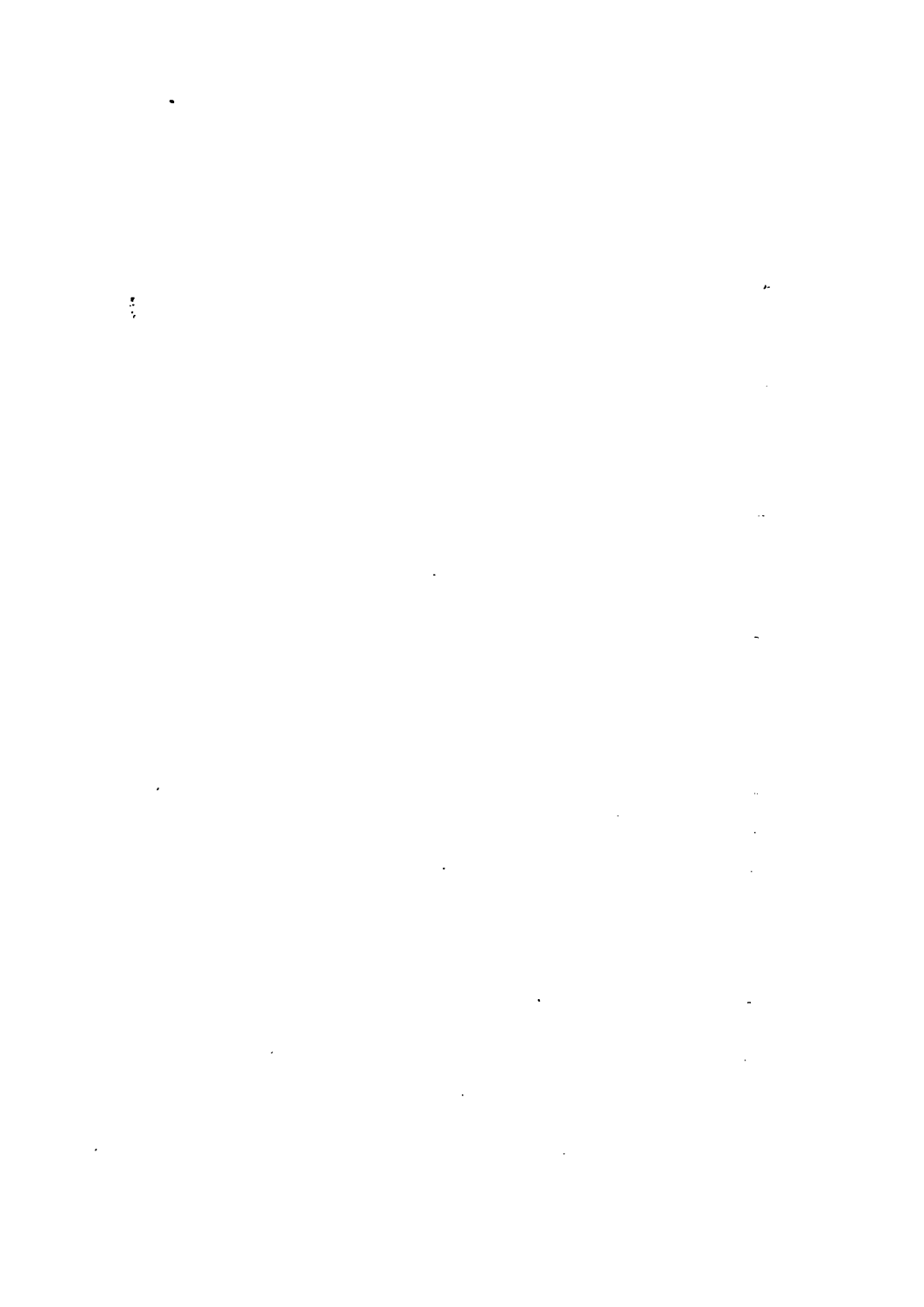
"Ghosts?" said Diana with scorn. "A fine time this is to talk of ghosts! I thought, Charlotte, you had more sense. I don't believe anything has happened. From what you say, George must have dressed as usual and gone for a walk. It's all nonsense to think he has disappeared. Where's uncle? I'll go to him in the library."

With her hair hanging on her shoulders, like Charlotte, she went downstairs to find Doctor Savidge, opened the library door and stepped within the room. Her uncle came forward to meet her.

"Child," he said in a voice that to Diana's ears seemed to travel a great distance, though every word was horribly distinct, "what I've most feared has come. Take care, Diana! The lounge is behind you. Lie down, dear. It's nothing. It'll pass in a

**moment.** Lie perfectly flat and you'll be all right.  
**A-hhh! Poor child, poor child!"**

Before she could reach the lounge Diana fell.  
For the first time in her healthy young life she  
**fainted.**



**HISTORY ONE**  
**ENTER ROSA**  
**IV—XI.**



*"Aspirations, desires, movements that are opposed and hindered, associated as they are with the opposite tendencies of the mind and the relative associated ideas, furnish numerous examples of association by contrast. Love and hate, confidence and diffidence, hope and fear, are the emotions most frequently alternating in consciousness, being ever in contact, as it were, on its threshold; and whenever one disappears the other occupies its post."*—BIANCHI.





## CHAPTER IV.

### KLEIN ENGAGES A NEW WAITER.

"Rosa! Rosa! Ach, R-rrosa!"

"Coming, father!"

"We'll see what my daughter tells us when she comes," Klein said in his guttural South German to the young man. "If she'll try you, I'm willing. R-rrosa!"

The restaurant was rapidly filling up. Several customers were already at supper. The odors of sauerkraut, frankfurter, cheese and beer commingled to make the young man feel faint as he stood leaning for very weakness against the window ledge. He did not look like a frequenter of the place. His finely modeled head was more the type of the scholar, the recluse, than of the habitual diner at a noisy German eating-house for workingmen in a country town. Plainly, however, he was hungry. Because he was not at Klein's as a customer but to apply for the position of waiter, Klein eyed him with suspicion; for Klein was hard-headed. The man who looks as if he had failed at being a gentleman may learn to be a waiter. In any event, he is a drawing-card on account of his appearance. Much too good a business man not to see that what to him was personally antipathetic in the applicant was to the advantage of his house, Klein again

called for Rosa. Father and daughter ran the establishment. Rosa's mother had died in the girl's babyhood, and now that Rosa was a grown woman she was associated with her father in business like a son.

"Look at him, Rosa. Will he do?"

Klein rarely spoke English. He jerked his words impatiently.

"He vants de shob Heinrich Hummel vas kicked out from last veek, Rosa. I hate his silly vite face. Still, de goostomers likes a vaiter more highborn-looking dan demselves. Do ve takes him?"

"Is he deaf?"

The indifference of the young man to Klein's commentary on his appearance astonished the girl. She stood in the doorway between the restaurant and the smaller room where her father and the new waiter were together. Her ample figure filled the space in which it was framed by the door-casing. The lights of the room beyond brightened into red-gold her crown of magnificent hair, outlined her vigorous shoulders, and threw into shadow the too prominent nose, of Semitic modeling, and a pair of keen gray eyes under a low broad forehead. A superbly handsome animal, Rosa Klein had learned early in life to take care of herself and to answer the coarse compliments of the men with whom she was brought into daily contact. She was sharp-tongued, self-conscious, self-sufficient and vain. Suddenly she felt susceptible to the timid friendliness with which this strange young man smiled, ingratiating himself with her. The men whom she knew did not look at her like that. It touched Rosa.

Friedrich Klein laughed.

"No, not deaf; but he speaks no English—not von vord. Dat, you understand, does not matter in our peesness, Rosa."

"Nein. In our business it does not matter."

"Goot! Ve takes him, den!"

Klein nodded pleasantly and went out. The young man and the young woman were left to each other, and Rosa experienced her first sensation of embarrassment. In a low voice she began to question him, speaking German and unconsciously refining her manner to suit the requirements of the atmosphere that he brought in.

"Father says you do not speak English?"

"I can not, Fräulein. I have never studied it."

While his voice was agreeably gentle his German was that of a child. Clearly, he was uneducated. His intelligent head and refined type of face were a physical accident that he seemed not to have lived up to. Rosa, however, did not know so much. To her ignorant ears his voice gave pleasure, and her eyes liked his smile.

"Father did not tell me your name," she continued.

"Emil Kreppel, Fräulein."

She coquetted with him.

"If you take the place of waiter here you must do what I say and let me teach you, Emil Kreppel."

Her smile was dazzling. The young man flushed.

"Thank you, Fräulein. I am indeed glad, for I need work. I'm hungry."

"Hungry? God in heaven, I knew it and I stood talking! Am I a fool that I can't see when a man wants food?"

She dragged Kreppel to the kitchen and made him

eat, hovering over him to serve him to the best in the house. She thought she could make him talk, for he excited in her a curiosity as strong as her admiration, but he was reticent. All that the girl learned was that he had walked a long distance in search of employment and that he felt assured he could act as waiter in the little restaurant, because most of its patrons were Germans and he could not speak English. Before Kreppel had finished the meal, Klein came in and grinned at the array of dishes.

"So-o? From the first you are better fed than Hummel, I see," he drawled. "With Rosa that means only you're to work better. Rosa won't let you starve, but she doesn't feed the lazy. Eh, Rosa?"

Emil was put to work, and Rosa kept aloof from him for days. Her suddenly waked interest had an emotional quality that she would not parade before the customers nor let her father make the subject of his jests. Furtively she watched Kreppel, and the romantic attraction grew with the mystery enveloping him. He did not do well. Fräulein Klein had to cover his deficiencies in waiting. Many among his mistakes she would not have tolerated in the servant he supplanted. The customers, however, enjoyed making game of Emil. If let alone Kreppel was always gentle and usually timid, but a mouthful of spirituous liquor extraordinarily excited him. They made him drink, and he became quarrelsome. His boyish skin flushed scarlet, and, finally, he appealed to Rosa for deliverance from his tormentors. The woman in the rough-mannered girl developed with a rapidity to make Klein uneasy.

Was Rosa capable of throwing herself away? He asked her. Rosa's answer was hysterical.

"Pack of dogs!" she panted sobbing. "You lead the brutes on, father, and talk to me like this! The poor boy doesn't want to drink. How dare you say he drinks? The customers coax him to take a glass, and after one for the good of the house he is excited over nothing at all."

"A man is drunk when the drink excites him," Klein maintained stolidly, alarmed for his daughter. He's a drinking man and no good who is drunk on a little. I'd rather see the fellow carry a cask of my best beer and not feel it."

"Like Heinrich Hummel," said Rosa bitterly.

Klein gave her a sharp look and flushed reddish purple.

"Heinrich didn't hang around my daughter. Fool that I was to listen to you and turn away a good waiter who knew his place! This thunder-and-lightning dumb-head in there"—he strung oath on oath to characterize Emil—"this gentleman-faced scoundrel, a good girl oughtn't to look at. Where does he come from? Nobody knows. Get him to drink enough and, perhaps, we shall find out. He's a jailbird with a record an honest man's ears would burn listening to."

In the room off the restaurant Rosa and Klein were alone. The girl turned tempestuously on her father, ripping out oaths that made his sound tame in comparison.

"Who said anything about taking up with Krep-pel?" she asked, after she had prodigally spent both her rage and her vocabulary. "It's likely he's some gentleman here for a reason. He's done no wrong.

There's no underhand courting with him in private, while others I could name——" Her pause was impressive.

"You're able to take care of yourself, Rosa," Klein grunted. "When you settle down to marry, choose a live man and one that's respectable. I tell you, I won't have a white-faced convict for my son-in-law."

The noise of other brawling interrupted. Rosa's anger mounted again. With arms akimbo she strode back into the restaurant. Kreppel ran childishly to meet her.

"Kind lady, I can bear it no longer. They call me names—filthy names. They mock at me and pull my hair. I will not take orders from men who invite me to drink only to spill good liquor on my clothes, hitting the glass before I put it to my mouth. Let me go. I can find other work. There are places where German is spoken and where I need not be insulted."

Rosa's bosom heaved with her fierce intake of breath. At the group of amused ruffians in a corner she hurled forth epithets to excite their passionate admiration. In brute force alone she was a match for any among them, while her beauty was even more provocative than in her softer moods. Her nostrils were inflated wide with rage; her gray eyes black with excitement; her hair was disordered; her splendid throat she exposed by a jerk of the hand at her collar, thereby freeing the pulse at the base of the neck column that fluttered as if the imprisoned words could not escape fast enough to avoid choking her.

"He's bound to suffer more from you than from

us, poor devil! Take him, gnädiges Fräulein," a man sang out, as Rosa half dragged Emil to the private room where she had left her father.

Klein, however, was gone—Rosa knew not where. He avoided scenes and she made them often. Violently she banged the door shut and, quite beside herself, crushed Emil's hands against her breast.

"They insulted you—you?" she crooned to him softly, "and I was not there to stop them! But you won't punish me by going away? You haven't the heart to leave me in this den of beasts? Listen, while I tell something that I meant never to speak of—never! Yesterday two men came to the restaurant. They were looking for somebody like you and asked questions, but I would not let them out of my sight. I talked with them, joked, kept them from chattering to other people and learning about you, made them think you were here once and had gone, and now they've gone away and were told nothing, so you're safe if you stay here. That's why I wouldn't let you show yourself in the restaurant at all yesterday or this morning. Nobody knows this but me, and what do I care for anything you've done before you came to me! You're a gentleman, aren't you? What brought you to us in the first place? Did you hear of me and know that I would want you to come?"

She said it quite simply. In her arrogance of eating-house beauty she was entirely sincere; for men often came only to lay eyes on her and remained to pray her favors. At the contact with her body at first Kreppel shivered, much as a small boy might tremble when gathered comfortingly to his mother's bosom after an unsuccessful encounter



with other and bigger boys. Then he was quiet. His muscular tension relaxed and his hands lay passive in her grasp.

"Emil!"

Blacker than ever her eyes looked. All color receded from her cheeks and lips, as if the blood-drops were drained back again to feed her madly beating heart.

"Kiss me! Father is the only man who does. Don't you believe that? No other man besides father. Because I joke and men like it and come here every night to drink or for their supper you shouldn't think I'm not an honest woman. Kiss me so that you can know for sure. Lips that haven't been touched by men must feel different from lips that have; they *are* different. When you kiss me you'll know, Emil."

As if hypnotized, he stood staring at her. She released his hands, which clutched then automatically on the clothing over her breast, and she took him gently by the shoulders. Shapely arms, though roughened by housework, they were that enfolded him, and as tender as those belonging to women who do not work. His slim figure swayed under the compelling caress. Nearer and nearer her tantalizingly beautiful mouth approached his face when, on a sudden, the lids fell over the too brilliant eyes and she sagged on him, heavy in languorous sweetness.

"I sha'n't see you kiss me, Emil. I feel that I couldn't bear to see and know both together. It's better to shut my eyes, pretending I'm just dreaming. Dear—kiss me!"

Not Rosa unaided, but Nature backing Rosa was

too strong for Kreppel. When met with in the raw, few men can resist Nature. Emil kissed and Rosa held her eyes tight shut while again and again he kissed her, till he was raining kisses on lips, cheeks and eyelids, and she in turn lay passive, letting him convulsively hold her in his arms. Old Klein coming into the room was thunderstruck at the spectacle.

"R-r-rosa!!"

The girl freed herself. She was entirely calm.

"Yes, father. What you see isn't surprising. I have this moment become engaged to be married to Emil Kreppel. Don't say a word! Nobody can change the thing that has happened, Papachen."

## CHAPTER V.

### ROSA SNAPS HER FINGERS AT NORTH HARROW CONVENTIONS.

Rosa was right. Nobody could change the thing that had happened, and the wilful spoiled beauty had her way. She was to be married with unfeminine expeditiousness. There was no woman near of kin to restrain her, and her father was wax in her hands. True, old Klein made a clumsy attempt or so at clearing up Kreppel's past, but could learn nothing. "That," Rosa declared proudly, "showed there was nothing against Emil. If anybody knew bad of him it would be told. People are quick to abuse a poor fellow."

"Ach, R-rrosa!"

She patted Klein's coarse jowls.

"Yes, they are, Papachen! But I shouldn't care what they said, because I love him."

He looked at her in wonder. "I don't understand why."

"Nobody understands. It's nobody's business. I love him and that's enough."

He groaned, but he shook his head without further speech. After all, what did it matter whom Rosa married? If he thwarted the girl she might run off. High-spirited girls do, when crossed in love, and if Rosa were not there to manage the restaurant it would go to smash. Provided only that

she stayed at home and attended to business, she might twist a husband round her little finger. Rosa's hands were equipped with exceptionally powerful little fingers for father and for husband. It happened that she was ambidexterous.

"Thou wilt go on with the restaurant?"

"Of course," said she practically. "How else could we live?"

Klein heaved an immense sigh.

"We couldn't. Take the fellow, then, if thou wishest him—I'm satisfied. But he's no gentleman and needn't expect to be treated like one."

Rosa tossed her head with a sniff.

"No gentleman? Wait and see! He's much too good for the men who come here, I tell thee! I'm glad, though, thou art happy, Papachen."

"So-o, Rosa! Happy—I? Ach, ja!"

Klein was as unhappy as the indolent ever allow themselves to be. He could not tell his daughter. Instead, he settled down into chronic distrust of his prospective son-in-law and the idlest curiosity about Kreppel's antecedents. He enjoyed to the full the distinction of having a grievance. Friends sympathized with him and business did not fall off. Not a man but disapproved of Rosa Klein marrying beneath her station, and none was willing to forego the fixed habit of flirting with Rosa while eating and drinking liberally of the good things that she provided. Rosa flirted as impartially as before, and Kreppel continued to act as waiter. The customers were outwardly more respectful to him. At least, the fellow knew a fine woman when he saw one and was able to walk off with her under the noses of eligible suitors! They let Emil alone. He showed

no inclination to drink, and recovered his former gentleness to which was added a fatuous air of content with his lot. Of his own accord he would not touch liquor, and unless under that influence was as inoffensive as the child he appeared mentally to be.

Klein had voiced the sentiment of the community; for, despite aristocratic looks and a single suit of good clothes, Kreppel did not make the impression of a gentleman on the mind of any save his future wife. With marked difficulty he read and wrote, and his writing was childish; being shaky, large and unformed. He spelled out his words in attempting to read a newspaper and showed distaste for the effort. In love demonstrations he was shy, and therein lay the secret of his power over Rosa. To conquer that shyness the girl was irresistibly impelled; yet her love-making was too sincere not to have dignity, and her innocence was primeval. So must Eve have appealed to the emotional in Adam; for if Rosa knew no reserve she practised no vulgarity. There can not be vulgar coquetry where the quality of love is pure. Call it passion, if you will. Rosa was vulgarly conscious of the sex attraction with other men. When they flattered her she liked their compliments, liked their jests, liked their familiarity, even while repulsing it. She was vain of her magnetism, and took pride in rejecting what commoner women, liable to fall, think pleasurable. Rosa, in fact, rarely thought at all. Not that she was brainless. With her, brain and hand worked together, and the brain was satisfied to direct the hand in performing the nearest duty, never looking beyond the day's work. It was an acute brain and

active. It seethed with energy, and was therefore physically capable to direct a most active vigorous young body. Rosa thought and planned in the interests of her father, her home and the restaurant. She enjoyed mastery over servants and the patrons of the house; over a few—very few—women friends, who were inclined to resent her domineering ways; over mankind in ordinary. To describe her mental processes it is safe to say that first she felt and afterward she thought—whenever mere feeling was not sufficient to her needs, as commonly it was. Abstract thought was as impossible to her as thinking without feeling; imagination was, of course, a closed book.

"We are soon to be married, mein Engel," she announced one day to her lover. "Dost thou want it?"

"I want to stay always with thee. I'm happy here, Fräulein," he said.

"Thou wishest to stay with me morning and evening, day and night, on earth and afterward in that heaven which the good God has prepared for us above? Thou wishest never to be parted from me—not in this world or any other? Isn't that it?" she cried.

Her face glowed at her own eloquence, and her voice trembled. She was radiantly, supremely beautiful—not with a vulgar beauty. Passion has its rights in the alliance with love, and the higher love may inflame a brain not of the first calibre. If the causes of Rosa's love were essentially vulgar, the love born of those causes was an exquisite thing.

"Ach, ja!" he answered placidly, "I love thee, Fräulein."

"Rosa," she said correcting him, "and not any more 'Fräulein.' Dost thou forget?"

"Rosa," he repeated, gently obedient. "No; I do not forget and I will do what thou sayest."

Her head swam. The sense of power intoxicated her.

"Come, then! We must work," she told him roughly. "What am I thinking of! The restaurant is full of people. Thou hast orders, and I have some. What are thine? Ten beers? Steins, did they say?"

"Steins," said Emil.

"Go in ahead. I shall take my order to Gustav Schiel myself. I want to speak to him."

Action was a necessity with Rosa. If she had stayed longer talking with Emil in a corner of the kitchen she must have crushed him to her heart then and there before the servants. The spirituality of his look she was familiar with only in pictures of blond boy angels. The mystery of his coming gave him an almost divine origin in her eyes, and she no more dared question it than she dared to question her religious faith, lest Emil be taken from her. In the eyes of the law Kreppel may have committed a crime. Indeed, Rosa fostered a romantic belief that he had. A vein of lawlessness ran through her nature. Sin, however, was another thing, and the sins of passion she would find hard to forgive him; but no one could look into Emil's face and accuse him of any sin of passion. His refinement was incontestable—a quite passionless condition. He might have committed some crime such as could be done by a gentleman. Rosa mistook his gentleness for gentlemanliness. She was as un-

used to the one as to the other. Hurriedly she rushed upstairs to her bedroom, thrust a rose into her hair and put on a fresh white apron, before she carried in the platterful of steaming frankfurters that Gustav Schiel had ordered for the party at his table.

When Rosa appeared, Joe O'Connor, North Harrow's wealthy liveryman, and Joe's party were being served to beer by Kreppel.

"Sausages, Fräulein Rosa? Here! Stop! Why are you taking them to the undertaker's table?"

"Because Gustav Schiel has ordered them," Rosa said, coolly. "I don't carry frankfurters where they're not ordered. Isn't this your order, Gustav?"

"It is," little Schiel said, rubbing his hands together gleefully, "an order made ten thousand times more precious for being carried to our table by our Fräulein Rosa."

"And what does Fräulein Rosa get for it?"

Rosa laughed. In boisterous good humor she showed her two rows of superb teeth. "The handsomest horses and carriages for the night of my wedding?" she said.

"Ye mean ye'll have 'em from the undertaker?" O'Connor screamed in English. "They'll bring ye damn bad luck, my girl! Don't you go sarvin' me an' my stable any dirty Dutch trick like that!"

Rosa's eyes flashed.

"I order horses and carriages how I please. You have your stable and Schiel has his. There is no other in North Harrow. If Schiel has to hire more horses than he has already, he can hire from you. I give Gustav my order; that's all."

"All? All? Rosa Klein, yer crazy."



The room was in an uproar. Many men laughed. The women here and there—middle-aged Germans at supper with their husbands and some with children along—were too horrified to laugh. They expostulated.

"I don't see what else can be," Rosa said, dropping into German, gay-tempered, while still defying criticism. "O'Connor can't suppose I'd forget that he pitched into Kreppel when he first came here, a new waiter who didn't know the ways. Joe's are not the only horses in North Harrow; but his and Gustav's are, so I choose Gustav's, and Gustav can hire more from Joe. That is a business I have nothing to do with—but I mean to have a fine wedding."

Death had no painful association of a personal grief for Rosa. She could not remember her mother. The impulse was to outdo O'Connor and revenge herself for the teasing to which the liveryman had subjected Kreppel. Tables were turned, now, literally; for O'Connor gave his a furious shove as jokes at his expense began to fly. The little undertaker was in ecstasies. So was Mrs. Schiel.

"Do you mean it, Rosa?" the Schiels asked her.

"I mean it," Rosa said, with the insolence of bouncing health and non-acquaintance with sorrow. She was beautiful, seen through the blue haze of tobacco smoke. Her color was unusually high, matching the flaming rose that nodded above her hair; her great bosom heaved with her excited breathing; but she continued smiling. There was no trace of anger in her joy of victory. She had dealt the pride of the O'Connor a crushing blow; for who

could have believed that a social function of the magnitude of a wedding could take place at North Harrow without him? There was not even the danger of losing Joe's patronage. Klein's beer, Klein's restaurant, and Klein's daughter's cooking were not to be duplicated so easily as O'Connor's horses.

"Den," said Gustav Schiel tremulously, for he could not control his emotion, "it vill be der vedding not alone of dis von town but of de county—und der von't be der sign of a funeral about it, needer!"

For the better enlightenment of O'Connor he spoke in English, and Joe squirmed in a mortified vanity as intense as Schiel's tenderer new-tickled species. From that night on, Kreppel had an enemy in the liveryman. Than the kindly little undertaker, Joe was a stronger man who would bide his time to do the beauty's lover an ill turn. If Rosa appreciated it she did not care, for she knew no fear. In her ability to look after herself and Kreppel she had a faith founded, one may say, reasonably on fact; for it was put often to the test and had not failed her. All this, however, took place while she was Rosa Klein. She was about to enter a new life and become Frau Kreppel. Young—dangerously, audaciously young and self-willed—because attractive, she had the evanescent sympathy of the handful of people who made her world and believed that they knew her. "All the world loves a lover," and Rosa Klein in love swept her world violently along with her. But all the world, too, loves a mystery and speculates on it. Tongues wagged over Rosa's choice of a husband.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE WEDDING FEAST.

"Haf you praided de manes und tails to grimp dem peautifool, Gretchen?"

Mrs. Schiel and the children had been working over the horses for hours. The little woman was so tired that she should be pardoned for answering with asperity: "God in heaven, Gustav, ye'd best think so!"

Before marriage Gretchen was Maggie Doane. She was Irish-American, speaking poor English and worse German, so she seldom used the latter tongue.

"What wid curryin' the hosses, helpin' the men ter bandage the legs, while doin' manes an' tails meself in dozens o' braids down both sides ter make the crimps extry fine an' wavy, me an' the children is wore out," she said sharply. "Let this be the fust and last time the girl is married! If he's a bad man an' if he ain't, I don't believe in no divorces."

The children—two little girls of seven and ten, respectively, and a boy of eight—whined in chorus:

"If he's a bad man an' if he ain't, we don't believe in no divorces. We hope Rosa Klein'll marry him anyhow, 'cause we wanten go ter Rosa Klein's weddin'."

Mrs. Schiel slapped them.

"Whatcher keep a-talkin' fer? Doncher know

papa ain't got no time fer talkin? Guess I'll have ter watch him an' youse the livelong evenin'. God in heaven, what children!"

The children bawled. Mrs. Schiel at her husband's side talked as steadily as if the little Schiels were absent, but Gustav was more nervous. Dapper in evening clothes, a wedding favor pinned to the lapel of his coat, his smile was sickly and uncertain, while his crossed eyes blinked one at the other. They appeared to be climbing the bridge of his nose and almost to accomplish the feat, slipping back again into place before the onlooker could make out quite what they were doing. At every failure of his eyes properly, or improperly, to adjust themselves, Gustav rubbed his hands the more nervously together. Hands and eyes lent one another courage.

"Don't scold the chillern youst pefore de vedding party, Gretchen. Beeples vill see dat dey haf been grying. Come, chillern, dis is a grreat day, und papa vill not talk too mooch to Fräulein Rosa."

Mrs. Schiel gathered up the train of her corn-colored silk gown, lace-trimmed, and prepared to cross the street to Klein's restaurant.

"A great day for our fam'ly," she said with content. "Poor O'Connor! Stop yer noise, children, an' come on."

There was a parade of carriages to the church, several blocks away, and a parade back again to Klein's for the wedding supper. The restaurant was jammed. Mrs. Schiel saw her husband take his station at the door to call the carriage numbers and the guests' names, in accordance with the practices published in the New York papers. The room was stifflingly overcrowded. Supper was served and the

floor cleared for a dance, and more supper was served after dancing. Klein's notion of entertainment was to call for supper and more supper whenever there was a lull in the festivities.

The old man was morose. He drank champagne with his guests while hating it. Beer at a wedding is out of the question and, instead, champagne was served in beer glasses till the dancing became not altogether decorous. Men steered their partners clumsily; but men and women alike took the bumping, the general dishevelment of their persons, in good part. Wedding dances were not given every night in North Harrow.

Rosa denied herself champagne for Kreppel's sake.

"If bride and groom can't take what they want and refuse what they don't want on their wedding night, more's the shame to the friends that'll interfere between them," she said outspokenly. "Drink with the Schiels, Papachen, to please me. Emil is not drinking."

The warning look that she gave Klein was thrown away. Her heart, however, ached for the old man whom she was leaving. Rosa had any amount of rough tenderness, the rough side of which she turned for Klein to see, hoping that he might not suspect the softness underneath. "Emil isn't drinking. Drink with the Schiels, Papachen, and with everybody—thou canst stand it," she declared, and Klein drank and he stood it, but it brought him no sensation of cheer. Indeed, he moodily eyed the bland young bridegroom and wished that Kreppel might become as tipsily foolish as Gustav Schiel, or in some other way be offensive to Rosa.

Emil seemed not to notice his deprivation of stimulant. He looked and behaved as a bridegroom should. Too happy to eat, he chatted, beaming on all who spoke to him, and hung adoringly on his wife's least word. Gustav Schiel's three children climbed over Kreppel, with shouts of glee at the goodies found on his person and the favors either tucked away in his pockets or worn grotesquely behind his ears for them to discover with shrieks of laughter. More and more Rosa's heart ached, her rough tenderness pricking herself and not the parent for whom it was reserved. At last she could bear the situation no longer and accosted Schiel.

"Drop those drunken fools and come over here, Gustav," she said. "I want to speak to you. Emil is safe playing with the children. He won't drink when he has promised me he wouldn't."

"Won't he? [hic] Fräulein Rosa—I mean, Frau Kreppel—don't you be sure of any man—Kreppel or another! What can I do for you, my dear young lady?"

Said Rosa, her eyes swimming in tears, "I can't take the wedding trip—can't go away to-night and leave Papachen. Look at him, Gustav, over there!"

Schiel looked as well as he was able. In misty outline he saw old Klein's huge bulk and his face's heavy mask twitching with grief of anticipatory parting from his daughter. Schiel saw the picture—and more. He did not like to say that he saw Klein double, but less distinctly than before the shank of the evening. The little undertaker's consciousness of the proud position of master of ceremonies was not drowned in champagne.

"Can't [hic] take a wedding trip, Rosa? You

have to, my child; you must! The carriage is at the door already. It [hic] will drive you and the happy man [hic] to the train. You must take a wedding journey, my dear, dear Rosa!"

He hiccoughed explosively.

"Egcuse me!" he said in English; "I shou—shouldn't be s'prized if I'g tagen gold [hic]. I'g got a gough, Rosa."

"You're drunk, Gustav," the bride said brutally, "but I don't mind you're being drunk if you hear me. I tell you, I won't take a wedding trip. I mean to stay with Papachen. What's the difference? In a day or two we'd be home again, and he can't run the place without me—not for that length of time. I tell you, Gustav, I won't go. Now, what do you mean to do about it?"

Schiel drew himself up, drunkenly dignified.

"Sshtop! I haf not peen drinking."

He dropped again into his mother tongue.

"By what right do you say so, Fräulein—Frau Klein—Kreppel—Rosa? An old friend of your family could not drink too much at your wedding—he could not! And that reminds me—you must take a wedding journey. It is done at first-class funerals everywhere. Nobody has ever heard of a respectable funeral [hic] without a wedding journey. You trust me for information of how things like that are done. I know—I do! But you don't know. Why, how many times [hic] have you been buri—married, I'd like to ask? Answer me that, if you can. How many? And what do you suppose you know about it? Answer me that, too! What do you suppose you know, Rosa?"

"I know you are——"

The dawn of an idea on the undertaker's eager little face arrested her attention. She stopped to hear what he had to say.

"I'll tell you something, Rosa."

He stretched himself on tiptoe to whisper. For the moment, practically, he was sober.

"What!?" Rosa cried. "Ach, ja, I'll do so! Tell Emil. Where is Luisa Breikopf? Don't tell Papachen! I will run. In my room upstairs I have my traveling dress. You talk to Papachen, Gustav."

She gave the little man a resounding smack with her full red lips square on his forehead; then she darted upstairs to her room.

In the confusion of the party breaking up, the carriage for the bridal pair was called. Other carriages followed and drove off in quick succession. The bride was gone. She had left at the hour agreed on, but had not bidden her father good-by. The old man could not believe it. Stupidly, he counted the few persons remaining in the restaurant and saw that Rosa was not there. The smiling faces enraged him.

There was a joke, it seemed; but Rosa was gone with Kreppel, leaving her father behind. Schiel came tipsily to explain:

"You saw [hic] the bride in her traveling dress [hic] run downstairs to take the first carriage that I called, Friedrich?"

"My own daughter refusing to say good-by to me? Ja, Gustav, I saw her run," Klein said bitterly.

"You [hic] saw your daughter, did you? 'It's a wise father [hic] that knows his own daughter!



I put Luisa Breilkopf with Emil. She wore a dark brown veil, and nobody recognized her. They thought it a good joke [hic]. The bridegroom is back again, and the real bride is in the kitchen."

"What!! Rosa—Rosa? Ach, R-rrosa!!"

"Was willst du?"

The beauty came from her retreat, still resplendent in her wedding finery, and threw herself on Klein's bull neck. The hug choked him worse than his showy clean collar. Of the one and the other he freed himself, while tears rained down his cheeks.

"So-oo, R-rrosa, thou wouldst not go? Thou hadst not the heart to leave the old man alone at his fireside?"

An absurd hope gripped him.

"Perhaps, then, thou wast not really married, too? Eh, R-rrosa?"

Her laugh rang out.

"Papachen! Thou knowest that part of the wedding is true! But Emil and I are not going away. We stay here always. Come, Papachen! Gustav and Gretchen Schiel and the children will take more supper. We are hungry. There is food, and there is beer outside. Beer for us; Emil is not drinking. Drink a little beer with the Schiels, Papachen."

When the party was quite over, the Schiels were gone, and Rosa and Kreppel had retired happy under the parental roof, old Klein stood weighted with food and drink, heavy-hearted because of the emotions of six hours.

"The dumb-head loves my girl," he grunted. "Any fool can see it and any fool can know that he'll give her no trouble to manage. I'm sorry Rosa wouldn't marry a man more—well, more a man, and

that's all there is to it! Rosa wouldn't. She likes people to do what she tells them. Kreppel will have his own troubles if he dares cross her—bless her! He won't dare."

Klein shambled off to bed.

"No, he won't! So it's good that Rosa did not marry a live man; it would be too hard on the man. Where is the one who can hold his own against Rosa? We will live together, somehow. I don't know how, exactly—but, R-rrrosa, she will know!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### JOE HAS SUSPICIONS.

Rosa did know. She rewarded Klein's amiability with letting him see no difference in the outer bearing of Rosa Klein and Rosa Kreppel. The indolent have a horror of change. Active-minded Rosa was quick to appreciate the advantage of allowing life for her father to slip along apparently on old lines, though in herself the change was so radical that the old lines seemed made over new.

In her voice, too, there were new notes—new and gentler. Than Rosa Klein she was far more considerate, readier to anticipate the wishes of customers, less sharp in her retorts. She was, in fact, the sort of woman to compel every one about her to be happy when she was happy, or, if miserable, to force others into sharing that condition. Misery not only loves company but insists on it. Exceptions to the rule are uncommon.

Such, then, was the atmosphere of the little restaurant that O'Connor could neither sulk in it nor keep away. Pulled up short by Rosa, he had seen that he was on the brink of falling in love. Physically he resembled Klein, and at Klein's age would be as heavy in both mind and body and would not care; but now he envied Rosa's husband his delicate

build and his womanish slender white hands that looked as if they had never done a stroke of work. Joe was lazy. Genuine affection for Rosa pushed him, however, to disturb old Klein from the apathy of content.

"A queer plum ye picked fer a son-in-law! Found out yet where he's dropped from?" Joe asked on an afternoon when the restaurant was empty and Klein and he sat smoking at one of the smaller tables set for two near the street door.

Klein removed his pipe from his mouth to answer: "Nein, und I don't care. Have some peer on de house, O'Connor, und let mein son-in-laws alone. If you don't, Rosa she vill get down on you, sure, und der vill be more troubles!"

"I'll take the beer," Joe said with good humor. "Your daughter is too foine a girl to git down on a man after knockin' the wind out o' him—see? It ain't a fair deal, Friedrich. Let's go ter yer little room nixt, an' chin. It's givin' me the creeps ter watch the blamed purp sneak round ready ter wait on us—ugh!"

Klein stood, looking frightened.

"Haf a care vat it is you say! R-rrosa, she will hear you, Joe."

"I ain't sayin' nothin' ter hurt her purty ears; but it ain't sayin' as how I wouldn't, if I could. I don't know nothin'. Wish ter Gawd I did know!"

Joe wheeled sidewise on the toe of one boot, balancing his heavy body on the other while he nudged Klein playfully in the ribs.

"Ter make over Rosa Klein inter Rosa Kreppel, an' no questions asked, was dead easy, but it wa'n't dead right, Friedrich, ye lazy lummax! S'posin' it

turns out as he's committed a murder an' is a 'fugitive from justice'—what then? Whatcher goin' ter do? Nice daddy ye are ter look after an only daughter!"

This method of stirring Klein's anxieties was direct, if crude. They were by now in Klein's private room, and O'Connor and he peeped through the crack of the partly closed door leading to the restaurant, and watched Emil at work setting the tables for the evening.

"Kin ye trust that 'ere feller? Not on ye life!" Joe said. "See his soft-slippered ways! They'd oughter prove him a good waiter an' don't. He's no waiter an' no gentleman—so, what? 'A fugitive from justice', he is; mebbe raised fer a gentleman but actin' the waiter. It about sizes him up, an' doncher fergit it!"

Poor Klein was in the way of peacefully forgetting. The slight that Rosa put on Joe by making Schiel master of ceremonies at the wedding Klein had then and there dismissed from mind. It was Rosa's doing, and he disapproved of it momentarily. Nothing rankled for long in his fat breast. Again comfortable at home he could banish worry, and he almost hated O'Connor for reviving suspicions given up for dead.

"Kreppel is Rosa's husband. Can't you do somethings better besides to talk against Rosa's husband?" he asked sulkily. Here comes Rosa! Talk mit her. Ach, R-rrosa, Joe O'Connor vants you—R-rrosa!"

Rosa came, smiling understanding. Jealousy she had met with before and found it not unpleasant.

"Talking about me—mein Mann and me?" she asked with malice the further to disconcert O'Con-

nor. "Have supper with us, Joe. Papachen, Emil, you and me—four together, early—before the customers come in?"

Klein's fat face brightened. The notion of eating struck him always as good, and O'Connor was not averse to it.

"Ja, wohl! Joe vill haf a supper charged up to de house," the old man said heartily. "A supper dat you vill gook for us, Rosa?"

"Of course—or it will not be *our* supper!"

A table was set where they were, in the little room sometimes rented out to parties. Private supping and dining, however, was not in vogue at North Harrow, and the room had not been put to that use in Emil's short day. Kreppel worked like an automaton. The least deviation from the ordinary always perplexed him. Rosa good-humoredly shoved him about, calling for dishes, plates, knives and forks—glasses, even—which he seemed to forget were to be fetched in. To so shy an automaton and one so gentle, it was difficult to attach the idea of crime. Joe himself found his suspicions becoming ridiculous.

"A born idjit, an' that's the troot! What a woman like Rosa can see in a born idjit ter marry knocks me silly. But we'll wait, an' I'll kape an eye peeled on him," the liveryman whispered to Klein when he got the chance.

"You keep your eye peeled all you bleez," Klein answered placidly. "If you don't, you'll find out dat R-rrosa can peel der two for you so easy like a gouple of potatoes—oder onions. Don't let her gatch you dropping any of your peelings in dis restaurant!"

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The pleasantry had effect. O'Connor kept his mouth shut till supper, but he studied Emil. Conversation between the two men was impossible. O'Connor could not understand a word of Kreppel's jargon. Rosa was the life of the party. She translated, adapted Emil's remarks to fit the occasion, lied freely, and did her best to put him forward as her proper mate, with the result that O'Connor's smothered passion leapt into flame. In Joe there was no evil—only animality. If Rosa had let him alone to wrestle with his disappointed vanity at losing all chance of getting her, his passion would have honorably burnt out. Rosa could not let men and things alone. She imposed on them her personality, and attempted to force them into doing and being what she wished. With Klein it was feasible. With a man not her father and unactuated by the slightest fatherly feeling, it was not. Rosa had not the mentality to understand, nor the delicate feminine intuition to guide her in feeling that what was possible with one man was impossible with another. She was vain of her power over Joe, and was devoted only to Kreppel. After all, mixed emotions belong to the simplest natures, and simplicity of character, with a strong will, is consistent with the mental incapacity for self-analysis.

"Joe," she said, leaning toward him across the table when he was soggy with beer and in the last stages of sentimentality, "you have not any unkind feelings on account of Gustav Schiel—nein?"

O'Connor shook his head.

"It ain't Gustav, Rosa."

She feigned surprise.

"Who is it?"

He indicated Kreppel.

"It's that!" he said.

"Ach, Joe! He is my man. You must like him, Joe."

Joe shook his head the harder.

"Yer askin' too much, my girl! Gawd knows I'd do things fer ye widin reason an' widout; but yer askin' too much. He ain't my kind, he ain't."

She smiled, blushing entrancingly. "I know! You can't understand his talk; but I like the kind he is, and won't you take the trouble to like the man I'm married to, Joe?"

As on many another occasion, O'Connor was stirred by her beauty, while now he was seriously jealous.

"No! I—I won't, Rosa; I can't!"

Paling a little, still she smiled. "You'll have to."

He was surly. "Who's goin' ter make me?"

"Ich—I am."

"Ye t'ink ye can make a feller do anythin'," he said. "Most times ye can, but there's some times ye can't."

He jerked his thumb in the direction of Kreppel.

"That's one! Ye can't do it this time, Rosa."

"Ach, ja, Joe, I can!"

Klein put in his oar.

"*Gott in Himmel*, Joe, the girl's happy, so let her be! Nottings but troubles, troubles! Haf more peer, und dis time you fills your t'roat till you can't talk. When t'ings goes beaceful, you comes here und you starts a row. Do you vant her to leaf de man she is married?"

At that juncture Emil laughed. He appeared not to understand a word of the conversation, but a



sense of mischief was developing in him through sheer happiness. The play of expression on the faces around the table was amusing. Happiness is a great developer of humor.

Rosa then laughed uproariously—albeit with less noise than was her wont.

"What do you think of it, mein Engel? Do you know all we say when we speak English?"

She repeated the remark in German.

"No," Kreppel answered, "but it is a funny language, and you are funny when you quarrel! I want to learn. Believest thou I could quarrel in English, too?"

"Thou art a gentleman," said Rosa gravely. "Gentlemen do not quarrel with liverymen and restaurant-keepers." She spoke with a pride as great as her daring.

Old Klein chuckled. "She hits us, Joe. Aber, dat is R-rrosa's vay! Pass de potatoes. T'ank you!"

O'Connor was tempted to throw the potatoes at Emil's grinning head. He did not dare. But he made up his mind to watch the rascal and ferret out his past. Cunning inquiries might do it. Yet how can a man ask questions of one to whom he can not address a word? Kreppel sometimes drank. Affected by a spoonful of alcohol he was quarrelsome. Drink, unfortunately, could not loosen his tongue in English and did not make him friendly. There were in town plenty of Germans who regretted Rosa Klein's marriage, and a few among them were scheming to make Kreppel drunk in order to show him up to his wife. Much as Joe hated Emil, he was in honor bound to protect him .

from secret enemies, and he must do it without Rosa's knowledge of the men's vile plans. Rosa must not, therefore, be allowed to judge between the prosperous liveryman and the wretch whom she preferred to him.

"I'm willin' ter be friends," suddenly O'Connor said. "Tell him, Rosa. He'll understan' ye."

Rosa was beaming.

"Joe O'Connor says he will be friends with thee, Emil," she told her husband. "No more rows, no more drinking and quarrelling—real friends."

She translated back again into English. "Is not that what you say, Joe?"

"Mebbe 'tis an' mebbe 'tain't. Ye put it purty darned liberal," Joe answered. "I'll do better'n I have done by him, an' that's all I'll say I'll do. Treatin' him more friendly'll show up what he is—mebbe."

"Joe says: 'treating thee friendly' will show all that thou art, mein Engel," she explained in German.

"A non-interested onlooker would have seen pathos in Kreppel's gentle smiling. Villainy can, of course, lurk behind mild blue eyes. A clean-cut, sensitive mouth, a skin as fair as a woman's, and a nobly intelligent forehead have been known to belong to rascals—particularly the forehead. Despite his gentleness, Kreppel did not look a fool, nor did he seem to be the man whom one can keep forever in leading-strings. He had a remarkable eye of extraordinary candor, but the candor overlaying his intelligence most persons could see no deeper. He would not talk about himself; he wanted to learn—learn! It was, perhaps, Rosa's fault that he could not speak English? Nobody else cared to teach

him, and Rosa neglected it. She enjoyed making love childishly—most women do. "He can talk English all right, all right! It's a blind," O'Connor thought. "There must be some dacent way ter fix him fer it!" Jealousy has all of love's cunning, with an acuteness quite its own.

Klein brought his big fist down on the table.

"More peer! Who's having a goot time here, Rosa? I ain't; und Joe ain't, needer."

"It's Joe's own fault," Rosa said. "And thou, Emil?"

"Was willst du?"

"Art thou happy?" the woman asked tenderly.

"Very, very happy! Always with thee, Rosa—my dear, dear Rosa!"

"Billin' an' cooin'!" Joe sneered. He was miserable and could not hide his disgust at the lovers' byplay. Rosa was delighted.

"Don't all bridal couples 'bill and coo'?"

"Some there is as has the common sinse not ter do it before the one man that it'll drive crazy mad. It ain't perlite. Give a feller that cares fer ye 'straight talk,' an' say it ain't, Rosa."

Rosa opened wide astonished eyes. She was enjoying to the full her revenge on O'Connor for every occasion that he had tormented Emil, and she showed a vulgar satisfaction in dealing with a vulgar man according to her usual methods. It pleased her both to flaunt her love and to flout O'Connor's in his successful rival's face, but all the while she was sub-acutely conscious that the man to whom she was married would find her actions vulgar. She would not have him understand, would not let him think. Since he was under her roof he had

not thought nor understood. From the first, the charms of her person captivated him. If they should prove to be her only charms, the effect would last for a long, long time, because they were many and were strong. Almost desperately she clung to her belief in them, poor Rosa! She knew that she was not a lady; she was equally certain that Kreppel was a gentleman. No one had yet shaken her faith. She put Joe's last remark into German, and asked her husband the provocative question: "Don't bridal couples bill and coo, mein Mann?"

"Ach, ja!" Kreppel said. "It is sweet, Rosa!"

He repeated the formula of which she never wearied: "I am happy here. I was not so happy before I came to thee."

O'Connor struck out then from the shoulder. His face was mottled with a passion more of rage than of love.

"Ask the idjit, now, if he's never been in love wid other women," he could not keep his tongue from saying, though, to do him justice, he was ashamed of himself. "Ask yer man, Rosa!"

Rosa turned white to the lips. Her eyes darkened till they were quite black.

"Hast thou ever loved other women, mein Engel? Joe wants to know it—ich, noch nicht!"

Though she spoke to Kreppel, her eyes remained fixed on O'Connor. Emil's answer surprised all three persons waiting for it. Like balm it fell on his wife's heart, and Joe did not need Rosa's rendering into English; Kreppel's tone of voice was enough. Charmingly frank and boyish, his voice carried conviction.

"Never! Never have I loved, never lived till I

came to thee! I remember nothing else, Rosa; I don't know anything that happened before. There is only that day when I felt thy arms around me and thou—thou didst kiss! Ach, Rosa, thy kisses are sweet! What man could kiss another woman? Why should he?"

"Mein son-in-laws haf answered—das ist genug!" old Klein said, emotionally Teutonic in his confusion of tongues. "You haf done your best to make troubles, Joe. Und you youst drops it! He lofs my Tochter, und he gifs her no troubles to manage. Efferypoddy is happy here. More peer, R-rrosa!"

Six weeks earlier Rosa would have slung a beer mug at O'Connor's head, he have dodged it, roaring with laughter, and the incident have been forgotten. To-night she said simply:

"You feel mean, Joe—nicht wahr? But that's all right! You said Emil was not 'your kind,' and it is true. I don't mind what you said; I am too happy. Have some more beer on the house, Joe, and I will not think so bad of you."

She turned to Friedrich Klein. Her husband's reward, on the sudden too sacredly sweet to mention, would be largely meted to him later. At present she ignored him. Rosa was learning refinement.

"Speak I the truth, Papachen? Joe has promised to be Emil's friend. He knows now that Krep-pel has not loved other women; he knows that we are happy. If he keeps on, he will know more than he wants. But he will not keep on. He will be good, and I forgive him."

She stood up. Never had she looked more im-

posing. Her tall figure was magnificently redundant in its generous perfection of the flesh—not often beautiful to see in so young a woman. It was, perhaps, not her fault that her strongest appeal was to the animal in most men. With Rosa's type of womanhood that is an appeal instantly striking the eye of the beholder and is a beauty that, once seen, remains in man's eye forever.

O'Connor stood facing her.

"No, I won't be good—not in the way ye mean! But I bet a hat, Rosa, that before I'm done wid ye, ye'll fergive it."

The girl laughed. She liked a good fight and a "stand-up to a finish."

"I bet I do! Ach, ja, Joe, I forgive a handsome fellow like you anything. Aber, I won't forgive you till you are friends with my man Kreppel."

"Su-ure! I'll be friends wid him fast enough," Joe said in a voice thick with beer and meaning. "It's up ter yer 'man Kreppel' only ter let me!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A DIRTY TRICK.

Few pleasures in life are greater than to find one's duty in the mischief one wishes particularly to do. Emil's enemies got together and laid plans. They believed in setting thieves to catch a thief—or, rather, sly dogs to corner a dog ten thousand times more sly. It was decided to wait for an evening when Rosa would be occupied in the kitchen, or at any rate not in the restaurant, and Emil might be drawn into conversation with the dare-devil young Germans eager to get him drunk in the cause of virtue.

Klein had no suspicion of the scheming. For a better chance of success the old man must be lured away. He was too much in Rosa's power to become their ally. Joe they did not dream would fail them. As a watched-for opportunity is sure to arrive sooner or later, the conspirators were rewarded with Klein's having to go over a batch of bills. His incurable habit of procrastination made him defer the business till long after the first of the month; then he got Rosa's help on what promised to be the little restaurant's "off night."

At O'Connor's usual table was a party of five, including Joe. They were remarkably quiet and

orderly for so long as the room was fairly filled with other customers, but they showed a determination to outstay everybody and the more persistent customers they out-drunk.

"Kreppel—here! culmbacher, wurzbürger, pilsener," were the early demands. Later, they asked for high-balls and mixed drinks.

As a waiter Kreppel was improved. He came promptly and served the drinks in the order in which they were called for. He was noiseless and comparatively attentive; but the fatigue of the evening soon told on him, and by eleven o'clock he was looking very tired. His was a remarkable head in the group of low-class Germans. Because he was so different and apparently of a superior type, their instinctive dislike was ready to take the positive form of hate. Joe was convinced that he had to deal with a rascal—perhaps a criminal—and he disliked his self-imposed "job" of protecting the man. He had the frankness to admit it.

"It'd do me heart good," he said, "ter feel there's a chance fer a fine woman larnin' the sort o' sucker she married, an' if he's done a crime we'd oughter find it out in fair play. Go aisy wid 'im, byes, an' be a leetle friendly. It can't hurt ye. I guv her me blamed promise I would. The deeficulty wid me doin' it single-handed is not spakin' his damned lingo."

One of the party offered Emil a cigar. He took it gratefully.

"Now, a chair for Herr Kreppel!" some one called. It was Rudolf Birnstein. Once a pretender to the hand of Rosa he was but recently engaged to a pretty girl to whom he appeared to be devoted.



"A chair for Herr Emil Kreppel!" Rudolf shouted. "He has no more work to-night. Sit down, man, and be sociable," he said in German. "You're dead. Hardly able to cross the floor; aren't you?"

"Hardly able," said Emil with a sigh of exhaustion, vaguely smiling. "Danke sehr!"

"Whiskey?"

Kreppel shook his head.

"Beer?"

For a fraction of a second he hesitated; then gently he refused.

"Aber!" Birnstein said, laughing. "Nonsense, man! She can't be so hard on you as that! Just a little of one of the light beers! You're worn out."

"I am worn out," Emil repeated mechanically. "Just a little of one of the light beers. But I gave her my promise."

Birnstein was encouraged by a wink from a man at the other side of the table and by nudges from elbows on either side of his person. He began to be excited. The lust of the tempter is stronger than that of the tempted who does not yet know he is about to fall.

"I tell you, Kreppel, she won't care." Rudolf turned to his companions for corroboration. "Will she, boys?"

"No!" was shouted in a thundering chorus. "She will not care."

"Because," Birnstein went on, encouraged and encouraging, "she will not know. Who would tell her?"

"Because," the chorus solemnly chanted, ranging their beer mugs in a row before Emil, "she will not know; for who would tell her?"

The voices paused impressively; then hummed in mighty unison, oratorio-wise: "None will tell, tell, tell, tell Rosa. None will tell Ro-o-oho-osa-osa-a-a—aa!" They ended all together on a deep bass note.

Emil was still vaguely smiling, while he stared at the beer mugs.

"Beer, beer! More, more beer!"

The men brought their fists down on the table and in unison proclaimed the brands of beer to be had at Klein's. Imported, domestic—they enumerated all. At the last, Kreppel rose, as if about to execute an order, but they seized him and pulled him down again to his seat. "There's enough here for you. Don't go! Take a mouthful from every man's mug, and we'll drink with you in turn. Who says we're not all friends here? You don't; do you, Kreppel?"

"All friends—all my good, good friends," Emil said. "That is good, and I will drink with my friends. Rosa would tell me to drink—if she was here."

He made an attempt to leave his chair.

"I will go and ask Rosa."

"No, you sha'n't!"

Five pairs of hands held him seated.

"Hssshh! Quit yer noise!" Joe said. "You fellers shet up or Rosa'll be comin'. If he takes a drink, he takes it over me dead body. Tell the idjit I'll be damned if I'll drink wid him an' let any o' youse tempt him ter drink. He knows he's a pertickler frien' o' mine—on account o' Rosa."

"Stay quiet, Kreppel, and have a drink. Joe O'Connor is your wife's particular friend and says

he will be the first to drink with you," Birnstein translated.

Emil suddenly nodded. "I drink with Herr O'Connor."

"Beer?"

"Ach, ja! Beer—anything! I drink to-night with Herr O'Connor."

"With me! With me! With me! Me, too!" cried the others.

"Nein, with Herr O'Connor," said Emil sententiously.

"Herr O'Connor, then. Here's to you!"

"Here's to ye all, if ye quit yer foolin'," Joe said, misunderstanding, and with shaking hand lifted his beer mug.

"To all!" they cried, putting every man his mug to his lips, except Birnstein, whose beer Emil was drinking. "To all, Kreppel! All! We've started it."

They had started it. A bottle of rank brandy was on the table. Kreppel helped himself to that and to the soda-water. He needed no more urging. In a few minutes he was flushed and his eyes glittered. The stimulant affected his sensitive nervous system as quickly as it might a girl's.

"We're friends at this table. Tell us, now, where you came from. No, no! Don't take another drink just yet! Have a smoke. Your cigar's out. Give him a light, somebody. Here, O'Connor, you over there, give your 'particular friend' a light. He's ready to tell us where he came from."

Emil relighted his cigar. "Where I came from? I will tell anything—anything! Aber, I do not know. More brandy, *bitte!*"

O'Connor confiscated the brandy bottle. At a wink from Birnstein the others declared, in the German that Joe could not understand, "No more brandy before you tell."

"Now you see," Rudolf said, "how we big men punish bad little boys. No more brandy till you tell your secret. Is it murder?"

"Murder?" the young fellow echoed, bewildered. "Why murder? Nein, brandy. Brandy—*bitte!*"

The fun began. One poured a glass of brandy and tossed it off himself; another waved the bottle derisively beyond Kreppel's reach and went through the motions of filling an imaginary glass which he drank in pantomime.

The victim's eyes started from their sockets. He was trembling in every limb. A member of the party took pity on him and offered beer. Kreppel seized the mug and drained it.

"It's easy to make out his trouble!" the tempter said in virtuous disgust and in English. "Can't carry a thimbleful of 'the booze'! Ask him if he's wanted by the police."

Birnstein asked. The drinker's etiquette is curious. While drinking, he plies his companions with liquor and despises those who get under the influence before he does. When at last he succumbs, equality reasserts itself in the party. The first person thoroughly drunk is the butt of the table. There is always a last man whose head—or stomach—is stronger than his fellows' and they appreciate it. A man must, however, be drunk indeed not to believe himself the last person affected. There is a topsy-turvy moment—amusing, if saddening to the sane spectator—when all are drunk together and

none knows his condition. In this instance, O'Connor was the only man sober.

"Take care, there! Look out! He's turned ugly, Joe!"

The warning came just in time. Like a wild-cat, Emil sprang at O'Connor, overturned the table, and would have had Joe by the throat if O'Connor had not struck out powerfully in self-defence. Kreppel was tripped by the table-leg and fell. He struck his head against the table and became unconscious. The revellers got back their senses. Some one emptied a soda-water bottle over Emil. It was to no purpose. Kreppel lay like a log. Regularly, heavily, he breathed but did not regain consciousness.

Rosa was used to ordinary rows and horseplay. Upstairs she was absorbed in helping her father with his accounts, and she and Klein floundered head over ears, neither being good at arithmetic. Rosa endeavored to keep the old man's attention fixed where it should be, ignoring the noise below. Much shouting, particularly guttural attempts at song, meant business for the restaurant. She was beginning to think that it was not the "off night" she had supposed, and was wondering if Emil needed her influence to keep order. Herself in loud-tongued argument with Klein over a bill, she did not heed the crash of the overturned table, but the onrush of silence afterward distracted her as tumult would another person.

"What's that?" she said, with her pencil poised in the air. "Hark, Papachen!"

"Nichts!"

Klein was cross at being interrupted in his mental processes when about to see the end of a long sum in addition.

"I hear nothing. Four to carry—*vier, vier!* And now because thou chatterest I make a new mistake, Rosa!"

She gathered up the papers with determination.

"Thou, too, hearest nothing? Something has happened, then. I will go to see what it is. Hark! Some one is calling me. It is Rudolf Birnstein."

Her temper flared. If Birnstein called, there was trouble—between Emil and O'Connor, probably. Instinct told her that there might be, and Rosa followed instinct. She acted with a swiftness unimpeded by thought.

"Sit down, sit down!" Klein said still more crossly. "I tell thee I hear nothing. It is late. Perhaps they have all gone home."

"They have not. Rudolf Birnstein is calling."

Rosa stalked from the room and ran downstairs. At the restaurant door she hesitated, overcome by dread. Never had she experienced the sensation of fear; but she had not known love before and she feared for Emil, dreading she knew not what. The door was jerked violently open by Birnstein, who almost tumbled over Rosa on the threshold. At his appearance her fears were justified.

"Fräulein—Frau—er—Kreppel," he stammered, "I called to speak to you, but did not mean you to come. You must not go in there. Send us a woman from the kitchen. There was a—a little accident, and we want a woman with towels and water."

"Who is hurt? *Mein Mann?*"

Birnstein was limp in her arms. She lifted him

out of the way as she might have done with an infant.

"I heard," she said. "Was it Emil and O'Connor? No matter! I will see."

He slipped from her hold in time to get between her and the door.

"You shall not go in there, Frau Kreppel. It is nothing—nothing! He has fainted and will be around in a minute. I'll tell you what happened."

For the first time since her marriage a torrent of oaths rushed from Rosa's lips.

"You will tell?" she said, infuriated. "You say you will tell me? It is I who will tell every man in that room what I think of him. Let go! How dare you hold me back?"

Her strength became then as water. She turned ashen. With dry, stiff lips she asked: "Is he dead—*mein Mann?*"

"No, no!" Rudolf cried. "It is nothing, Frau Kreppel. Quiet yourself! Can't you hear him breathe? He has only fainted. Bring water and towels."

Rhythmically loud as was Emil's breathing, Rosa could not hear it for the throbbing in her ears. Her strength, however, returned, and again she put aside Birnstein to enter the room. Never will the men forget the expression on her face as she went up to them! The group parted. Kreppel lay where he had fallen, and Rosa knelt with a simplicity that frightened those who knew her best.

"Who did it?" she asked briefly.

Joe took his courage in both hands. He falsely confessed to having excited Emil, but explained the accidental misstep and fall.

She pointed to the door.

"Go! This isn't a safe place for you. When you're wanted by the police I will send word."

To the others she turned with the excuse: "If I let him stay it will be worse, for I couldn't keep my hands off. Somebody call the ambulance, please."

Beyond his labored breathing to show that he was not dead, Kreppel gave no sign of life. The ambulance arrived and the usual restoratives were tried before he was taken, still unconscious, to the hospital.

Rosa was submissive to authority. The ambulance surgeon's few questions she quietly answered and did not dispute the men's softened account of the ruction. O'Connor hung round, utterly wretched, but could not get a word with her. Old Klein made the scene from which his daughter abstained. There was no formal charge of assault, so that the men's excuses were accepted by the police. Kreppel was taken to North Harrow Hospital.



## CHAPTER IX.

### NORTH HARROW HOSPITAL.

For forty-eight hours Kreppel lay unconscious. The doctor told Rosa that there was no fracture of the skull and that at any moment the patient might come to his senses.

"It's an insignificant scalp wound with concussion, Mrs. Kreppel. There is nothing unusual or alarming about the accident, so you mustn't be frightened," he said kindly. Yet for forty-eight hours, almost continuously, she crouched watching beside the nurse at her husband's bed, till there came what was to her a terrible change. Emil began to rave in delirium, erysipelas covered his head and face and he was violent, not recognizing his wife.

The rows of beds in the hospital ward looked to Rosa like surging billows at sea, every one foam-capped, bearing a drowning man whose despairing face was upturned in the appeal for help. Her husband alone she intended to save, but he was drifting past with the others. Unsteadily she rose to go to him. The doctor and a nurse led her into the corridor for air.

"Won't you go home, Mrs. Kreppel?" the doctor urged. "Your father is waiting."

"Papachen—waiting? Warum?" she asked stupidly. "I must stay to help *mein Mann*. If I don't get to him he will drown."

"Oh, no, he sha'n't!" Doctor Howard said, professionally reassuring. "I'll look out for that! We shall have to give him a private room. Because of the erysipelas, you know—or you don't know—he can't stay in the surgical ward; but you may come back as soon as we feel that your excitement can't hurt him."

Rosa was quiet at once.

"All right. I will go back, Herr Doktor."

Howard was at a loss to know how to deal with her. He knew Klein's restaurant and the Kleins, more or less casually, for his visits to the place were made only when, too hurried to be fastidious, he had to snatch a meal where he could. He hated the noise and blare of the small close room crowded with common Germans. Under the strain of his hospital work he was an ambitious young surgeon, of ordinary mind, narrow interests, acquiring experience as fast as he was able, while anxious to gain a footing in New York after making his name in a country town. He was not a native of North Harrow, but preferred the appointment of surgeon to its hospital to an obscurer position in the great city toward which his soul yearned. In appearance he was lank and Cassius-like, of kindly solemnity. Kreppel's case interested him. So did Mrs. Kreppel.

"At least, take your father away! Be sure to call early to-morrow," he suggested for a compromise.

Rosa saw Klein waiting, and she allowed him to lead her out. She had the sensation of weeping internally. Tears were falling within her, hot and fast, scalding her sore heart, while her vanity re-

joiced that her eyes were dry and no one could see that she suffered. She was not aware of her dulled eye-gleam, eyeballs and lids reddened by the long vigil, and her face quite wiped of beauty till it was become scarcely recognizable.

"He does not know me," she told Klein in a whisper, then she sobbed: "Ach, Gott, he does not! Father, father!"

The outcry was not a breakdown, for Rosa was no mere hysterical woman. She was passionate; fierce in love and hate, and violent—intentionally so—in emotional expression. In her rough life she found that to kick against the pricks and to kick hard often turned the sharp points away from herself into other people. Having made the discovery, she profited by it. Also, she grasped life's nettles with eager hands to get from them what she could, and wrung considerable pleasure out of mere existence with long working-hours. Such a life is ill preparation for patience under disaster. She was twenty-two years old and had not an inkling of how to suffer without upheaval of her moral being and frightful temporary havoc of the physical. To-day she looked fifty.

Klein took his emotions more normally. He was voluble. Enormous globules of apparently fresh-water tears, free from the stinging quality of salt and, therefore, not disfiguring, ran their limpid course down the furrows that age and good living had ploughed along his cheeks.

"Thou wilt not go back to the hospital too soon, my girl?" He wrung his puffy hands. "The restaurant will do no business, R-rosa, unless thou art there, and we will get a bad name. Wouldst thou

drive away O'Connor, Rudolf Birnstein and the men who bring us the most money?"

"What men bring us most money?"

Klein made a gesture of despair. He felt, then, the force of the calamity that had befallen his house. Why, oh why, had he engaged Kreppel as a waiter!

"Ach, R-rrosa, the dumb-head only cracked his skull by falling! It is nobody's fault that he did it, and the skull will heal. Aber, I am forgetting! The most high-born Herr Doktor told us that it was not cracked at all, and Emil will get well. Thou wilt not stay again for so long a time at the hospital? Ach, R-rrosa!"

Rosa did not heed this special pleading nor old Klein's noisy lament. She went about her task of setting their demoralized home in order, regulating the servants' duties, seeing to it that her father should have every comfort in her absence; then she returned to the hospital. It was believed that Kreppel could not live. Doctor and nurses allowed her the utmost latitude in being with the patient. Kreppel began to improve, though slowly. Little by little his mind cleared.

"You must keep out of his sight, Mrs. Kreppel. He's better—much better," Howard said on the second day.

Rarely did Rosa condescend to wheedle. But conditions in love changed her. She was too intelligent not to learn her lessons as they were thrust on her aching brain.

"I can be quiet in a corner of the room where he will not see me, Herr Doktor. Don't send me away from my man!"

"Make the least disturbance and off you go!"

Howard answered, frowning. The woman's persistence so annoyed him that it got on his nerves.

"You understand, Mrs. Kreppel, it's a matter of life and death. Pull a long face, hanging round here, and you destroy his chance for life. Why, in heaven's name, won't you stay at home and let me get you by 'phone?—if you can do any good!"

Rosa failed to take offence. Only, she dug her fingernails into the palms of her hands in the effort for self-control. "Herr Doktor!" she was beginning, when Emil interrupted. Slowly but rationally, he spoke his childish German. Howard could not understand him, and Rosa's hopes sprang up.

"Ach, now you need me!" she declared in triumph. "My man speaks no English and it is a German you can not know."

Howard ignored her.

"What is your name?" he asked the patient.

The man appeared not to understand, so Howard enlarged the question by asking: "Are you Emil Kreppel?"

"Emil Kreppel."

At the sound of the loved voice repeating the name, Rosa slid from her chair to the floor, and out of Emil's line of vision she bowed her head on her knees with a moan like an animal. Kreppel did not heed her.

"Do you know what has happened?" the doctor went on. "Do you remember what provoked you—the cause of the quarrel? Had you been drinking?"

The successive questions were every one in English, and Kreppel showed genuine bewilderment and could not answer. Rosa crawled to the bedside, imploring Howard to let her act as interpreter.

Contrary to expectation, his wife's presence did not excite Kreppel. He smiled affectionately, and extended a hand to meet hers. The gaunt sick fingers showed how emaciated the poor fellow had become through fever.

"I know thee, Rosa," he said. "Thou, too, art here; but I do not understand where it is that we are and who the man is who talks English."

"The most high-born Herr Doktor of—of the hospital," Rosa hesitated. "He has taken care of thee since thine accident, mein Engel."

Kreppel clutched her in fright.

"What accident? Wast thou hurt, Rosa? And I? Why am I here in bed?"

"Thou hast had a fall and wert hurt."

In great distress Rosa turned to the surgeon.

"He does not know he was hurt, Herr Doktor. Must I tell him, and tell more?"

The case was one of absorbing interest. For several seconds Howard pondered before he answered: "Yes; tell. His mind is clearing by degrees, Mrs. Kreppel. If at first he rambles a little in his talk, there is no reason for alarm. I wish I knew his queer German."

Rosa smiled, and smiling brought back her beauty.

"You have to know what he tells me—*nicht wahr?* And you will let me put his words in English for you? He does not speak like the rest of us. People say he looks like a Herr Professor but talks the child-talk. He can understand the German he speaks himself."

"Strange! Not one word of English, you say? Odd he shouldn't have picked it up! How long has he been in this country?"

Rosa took umbrage.

"Must he speak English?" She resented the tone that men were disposed to take with her darling. "Because I am long in this country I speak the language."

"You've scored, Mrs. Kreppel," said Howard with good-humor, "and you may act as interpreter. But we ought to get down to the history of the case. I need to know his parents' names, where he was born, his age and all that. Ask him."

Poor Rosa! On Emil's admission to the hospital she was put to the ordeal of confessing that she knew nothing of his past, and she limped again through her brief story.

Howard was moved.

"Cut all that! You needn't tell your love-affair. It's not my business. But you know nothing of this man? Your father could learn nothing?"

She dropped into German. "*Nichts, nichts!*"

"Well, this isn't the time to ask embarrassing questions. We shall have to get him on his feet first."

"I have asked," Rosa went on in German, speaking in the deliberately loud tone that foreigners use to one another in the hope of making themselves understood. "When he was in good health I asked often, but always he gave the same answer—he did not know." She recovered her former spirit. "And," she said, "I care not to know who he is, Herr Doktor."

"Anyhow, he is your husband. You're sure of so much," was Howard's clumsy pleasantry. He could think of no more comforting remark for the moment. "From that point onward the story is clear to anybody. He is good to you?"

The amusing question was worth putting to Emil, who laughed as heartily as Rosa.

"Goot? Ach, ja! Goot, Herr Doktor."

"Then it's nobody's business but your own; or, if it was, the time for investigation has passed. He has his reasons for keeping dark, I suppose. You're a remarkably incurious woman, Mrs. Kreppel."

The compliment was unkind—calculated, perhaps, to disturb the feminine mind; but Rosa shook her Teutonic head, appearing obstinately unruffled.

"He may tell what pleases him; he is my man," she said simply. "I love him, Herr Doktor."

"I've nothing more to say." Howard shook her warmly by the hand.

"I hope, Mrs. Kreppel, you may always be as happy! You deserve it. Tell your 'man' that in my opinion he has the ideal wife. Tell him to get well promptly. Tell him anything you please. Shall you stay a while longer? I must make my rounds. Good day to you, Mrs. Kreppel."

"Good day, Herr Doktor."

In pity, Howard left the two together while he made his rounds. He was inclined to the prosaic and was sceptical of romantic love, yet his imagination was busy with the character of the man and that of the woman. The woman's beauty stirred him more particularly. As a physician he admired her superb physique, with the way she carried flesh so that one scouted the suspicion that possibly it might be fat, or ever could become too, too solid. Happiness brought back Rosa's youth, her dazzling smile and color.

Apart from his professional interest, Howard's feeling for the husband, originally of a higher or-



der than that excited by the wife, was, in the main, disappointed. Emil bore the hallmark of the gentleman. Body, hands and feet, head formation were fine; while small niceties in the care of his person, like over-anxiety for the condition of his fingernails on the instant that he became conscious, belittled gentlemanliness through too loudly proclaiming it. Why was he uneducated? How came he to have the qualities of a hypersensitive girl, with nothing to prove him in the least Rosa's true superior? He seemed of finer clay, certainly, and he looked intellectual. Could he be so great an actor as naïvely to play the fool, and in so doing what might be his object? No; he was not his wife's equal in devotion, in unselfish, passionate love—that rare and touching tenderness of the mother-instinct belonging to the best of women. He was an idol of, perhaps, fine clay, but with a flaw in the casting that Rosa's lack of cultivation made it impossible for her to perceive. She had not the trained taste, nor the sense of fitness of things that a lady is supposed to exercise in her choice of a mate. Howard had heard that old Klein's daughter boasted of marrying above her station, while in the opinion of her class she was married beneath it and did not know. Now that he was acquainted with Mrs. Kreppel he was glad she did not know, glad she was content in her marriage. With the common man, of animal propensities like her own, she might have quarrelled, degenerating into a virago.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE HIGHROAD TO RECOVERY.

Gradually the erysipelas faded, and Howard ordered all medicines discontinued. On the whole, he found his patient tractable and even-tempered, while Kreppel's gratitude for the care given him was expressed in the warmest terms, translated by his wife.

"I shall be sorry to lose him, Mrs. Kreppel," the surgeon said heartily, "but if your husband improves at this rate, in a day or two he'll be so well that you may take him home."

"Ach, you make us happy, Herr Doktor!"

Rosa hung beaming above Kreppel's bed.

"Hearest thou what the Herr Doktor says, Emil?" she crooned. "Thou art now so well that in a day or two I shall take thee home."

"*Ja?*" said Emil. "We go home again, my Rosa?"

His face clouded.

"It is nice here. It is comfortable. Could we not stay for longer?" he pleaded.

"Thou shalt find it still more comfortable at home," Rosa answered jealously. "A hospital with a kind, a very kind and good Herr Doktor is not, however, thy home, mein Engel."

She turned to Howard.

"The Herr Doktor will teach me to take better care of thee than the highborn nurses do. But thou shalt be cured and not need a nurse. *Nicht wahr, Herr Doktor?*"

"From to-day on he needs nothing, Mrs. Kreppel, but the strength which good food and your care will bring back," Howard said.

Kreppel's vapid talk that Rosa translated stirred Howard to a wholesome anger.

"Why hasn't the fellow backbone? It is something to be sweet-tempered, of course, but a man should have sterner stuff in addition. Pity the woman hasn't a child," he thought, "instead of being obliged to make a baby of her husband! The strong women all do it."

"Why are you smiling, Herr Doktor? I don't like that smile. You laugh at my man and me?"

Howard shrugged his shoulders.

"An exaggerated sentimentalism is excusable in a couple not long married; but you spoil him, my good woman. When will you let him be a real man?"

"Ach, he is man enough!" Rosa said, smiling broadly. "I like him so. He is a gentleman."

Howard could not find it in his heart to contradict her.

"Is that your notion of the gentleman? Best not coddle him too much, Mrs. Kreppel. Instead, teach him English."

"When he is well he will learn."

She went to the door with the doctor to ask in an agitated whisper:

"Must he stay here to-night? Let me take him home, then, in the morning. Most gracious Herr Doktor, let me!"

"Um-m—possibly! No; it wouldn't do. I think, however, it's safe to promise for the day after."

She had not hoped for so much.

"*Ja, ja!* You mean it? The day after, then?"

The true physician is non-committal.

"That is to say, unless something unforeseen should prevent, Mrs. Kreppel."

Rosa laughed.

"I will see that nothing prevents! The day after—we go!"

Howard laughed, too.

"What will you do with him at present? Amuse him for an hour, like an infant?"

"*Ach, ja!*"

"Amuse him, then."

The surgeon hurried away, and Rosa returned to Emil. A nurse brought in a tray with the patient's supper. Rosa took it from her.

"I will feed my man myself, thank you! He is better to-day. Doctor Howard says that he is well, and I take him home on the day after to-morrow."

Emil lay like a child, contentedly smiling, and like a child he opened his mouth to be fed. He was cheerful, but not inclined to talk. In fact, he seemed really hungry; and Rosa fed him by spoonfuls, rejoicing in every morsel that he swallowed, while she grumbled at the hospital fare. As a restaurant-keeper's daughter, it was incumbent on her to be critical of food.

"Ach, wait till thou seest what meals I will cook for thee at home on the day after to-morrow! This is swine's leavings."

Kreppel's mild blue eyes blinked with astonishment.

"So-o, Rosa? And it tastes very good."

She rolled her eyes heavenward.

"What an appetite! God in heaven, if that tastes good, what will my cooking taste like? Rememberest thou my cooking?"

Emil nodded. His mouth was too full of boiled rice for him to speak.

"I remember," he said finally. "None can cook like thee. When do we go home?"

At that she laughed, tearfully joyous.

"We go soon—soon! But I will not tell thee when before thou hast told me what I must know. Believest thou yet that thy wife can keep a secret?"

He appeared indifferent, smiling only because she smiled.

"*Ach, ja!*" he said. "Many secrets. Why not? Canst thou not keep many secrets, Rosa?"

"I know not, mein Engel. Since I was a little girl it was always the same. Secrets," said she sorrowfully, "I had to tell to people."

Tenderly she wiped his lips and fingers, and folding the napkin, laid it on the tray.

"I am now a married woman and have waited long to hear thy secret, Emil. Thou art well, so tell me."

She put her hands quickly over her ears.

"But not—not yet! I have not entirely finished what I must confess. The proof of my love was to ask thee no questions. Then came troubles to make me stronger, and at last I feel sure that I can hold my tongue."

"Canst thou?"

"Indeed, mein Engel, I can!"

The poor fellow looked puzzled.

"Ach, dearest Rosa, I would tell thee secrets by the dozen, if I knew them! Thou art so good! But what can I tell thee? I know not what to say, and, God in heaven, I am sleepy!"

He stretched his arms above his head on the pillows, seeming healthily tired. After an enormous supper he was prepared to sleep. Rosa took alarm. For the second time jealousy stirred within her. Her hour was short. It was nearly gone. In a few minutes the nurse would come for the tray and the patient's wife be expected to leave him for the night. She crouched by the bed and seized one of his hands, stroking it.

"Don't tell me! No! Not yet, not yet! But let me ask questions which thou wilt answer. Thou wilt not lie to me?"

"Nein, nein, Rosa!"

He spoke drowsily. Evidently, he was dropping to sleep.

She gave his hand a vigorous jerk.

"The Herr Doktor will come; the nurse will soon ask for the tray. We have only one moment together—one moment! Say that thou wilt not lie to me!"

"I—I will not lie," he murmured, half asleep.

"It was then the truth that thou toldest Joe O'Connor when thou saidst thou hadst not loved other women? Thou hast not loved any woman before me?"

"I think not," he articulated with difficulty.

She was deathly pale.

"*Think* not? Answer me, Emil! She is dead—that woman who came before me?"

"No woman is dead who came before. Let me sleep, Rosa—*bitte!*"

She persisted with her probing. A thousand women's claw-like fingers seemed tugging at her heart-strings.

"If she is not dead, that woman, I must see her. I must know where she lives, Emil, for she has to be told that thou lovest me in her place and can never love her again—only me!"

"Never love her again," Kreppel repeated in a dream. "We go back home again, Rosa, but now I have to sleep."

She gave a great sob, joy strangling her. To a jealous woman nothing is sweeter than to wrench her lover from the memory of his past. Her hold over Emil was thereby doubled. At last she had a portion of his secret, but not all! Seizing on part of it, she would not let go till she had the whole. The nurse came for the tray. Rosa walked over to the window and looked out.

"Why!" the nurse said, "he is sound asleep, Mrs. Kreppel, and looks as if he'd go through the night without stirring an eyelash. Take a peep at him. It's beautiful."

Rosa came. "*Ja,*" she said, "he sleeps sound. Let me be with my man a little. I have still fifteen minutes before I must go, and I must not lose that."

"You won't wake him?"

Rosa shot her a look of scorn.

"Do I want my man to get well more than you want him? Would I wake my man? I can take care of him as good as a hospital nurse can."

"No doubt," the nurse said amiably, "but little

things wake a patient, and sleep is, after all, the best medicine. I meant only to warn you."

Rosa made no reply and the nurse went off. Other patients claimed her attention in the ward. She was sorry for Mrs. Kreppel and always had been. Short answers from Rosa did not offend her, and when Mrs. Kreppel would not speak at all the nurses let her alone.

"He will sleep sound the night through?" Rosa repeated to herself in wonder. "I fear he is still very weak to fall so soon asleep, and to sleep so sound. I wish the Herr Doktor would come."

As if in answer to her wish, Howard appeared at the door. She motioned to him that Kreppel was sleeping, and he tiptoed in.

"Best sign yet!" he said cheerfully, counting Emil's pulse and noting his respiration. "A sleep like that will last for many hours. You go and make ready for him at home, Mrs. Kreppel—quick!"

But Rosa would not smile.

"I don't like his sleep. It is too sound, Herr Doktor," she said.

"Nonsense! I almost said: 'Rats'! Go home, Mrs. Kreppel. Medicine is my profession; not yours. You need sleep yourself. While he's in this state it's your one chance to get it. Go!"

"Can you tell for how long he will sleep?"

"He's good for ten hours—maybe twelve. When he wakes he'll be a different man. There's nothing like it, you poor child, and it's the medicine you need."

Rosa looked tired. The lines that suffering had drawn around her full red mouth robbed her bloom



of much of its vulgarity. Rings of anxiety circled her beautiful eyes. Though paler and less like the dashing belle of Klein's restaurant, she was ennobled. Howard felt the charm successfully hidden from the majority of her admirers—that of Rosa's higher nature.

"If only you will try to rest, Mrs. Kreppel," the surgeon said gently, "I give you my word that I will send after you at the moment your husband wakes."

Rosa tried to smile.

"You know, Herr Doktor, I am anxious."

He took both her hands.

"Yes, I know. Please trust me, Mrs. Kreppel!" he begged.

"Ja," Rosa said simply, and she went.

Howard called a nurse.

"How long has he been sleeping like that?" he asked her.

"Since Mrs. Kreppel fed him his supper. I came in a few minutes ago and took away the tray."

"Had he an appetite?"

"Excellent, doctor. He ate hungrily and would have taken more, I think, but we had your orders. I didn't offer more." The nurse smiled. "His wife believes we starve him."

"She may feed him anything—once he's out of our hands. All right! You may go."

"Yes, doctor."

The surgeon, however, lingered; for the boyish figure on the bed held him. Now that Kreppel slept at an hour when Howard had nothing to do, he would try to make out what there was about this patient so to differentiate him from others. What

was his secret? What could a mere boy—certainly not older than twenty-two or twenty-three—have done in the past that he should hide with so scrupulous a care and so extraordinary a success? Not a hint had he dropped in delirium nor in talking rationally. There could not be a purer brow, a face that in repose looked more entirely at peace with the world, so whatever his past it must not weigh on his conscience. While Emil's timidity was unusual, it was not that of the man who trembles under conviction of sin and dreads the exposure of some criminal offence.

"He may be a case of arrested development," the doctor reasoned thoughtfully, "but, then, he couldn't conceal where he comes from. No; it's not that! He is cleverer than he appears; still, he has no education. He doesn't look like a German—not of the type round here; he looks English. If only he prattled naturally of his past, I could write him down, 'arrested development,' and so get him off my mind. Whatever possessed that stunning creature to marry him, I wonder? How these women do like some poor devil they can boss, because he hasn't the spunk to contradict them!"

Rosa's vivid personality once introduced into the picture, Howard's thoughts wandered from Emil to Mrs. Kreppel.

"An infatuation! How long will it last, and what'll happen to break it up?" he inquired of himself. "Lord, how the rascal sleeps! Wish I could get like that miles away into the land of Nod! It's like an animal."

Emil's relaxation was rare to see, save in children after a hard day's play, or in members of the

cat family. It made him look younger than his years, whatever they might be, and more innocent than Howard felt justified in believing him.

"You young villain!" he muttered. "Let me get you on your feet outside this hospital, and I'll make you say who you are! For so long as you're my patient I can't attack you. Not know English, indeed! I believe you speak it as well as anybody."

There is small satisfaction in apostrophizing a sleeping figure. Howard had the physician's dread of breaking the healing spell of sleep. It would be needlessly cruel. Whatever else Kreppel might be, at present he was that interesting impersonal entity, "a case" in his physician's care, and a case practically cured. The scalp wound was healed; the faint traces of erysipelas were no longer a disfigurement. Blond ringlets curled on his fair young forehead.

"Any one who admires the sort of good-looker you are would admire you immensely," the surgeon said grimly smiling. "I hope your poor wife is sleeping as peacefully, but I doubt it. She ought to, though. Guess I'll look her up and make her. I want some supper."

He took his hat and overcoat—the night air was chilly—and he went to Klein's restaurant. It was something of a walk from the hospital. The trolley-cars ran by the door, but Howard would not ride. He walked, and while walking he thought hard. The case of Emil Kreppel puzzled, teased, almost angered him. He took it as a personal injury that with the rest of North Harrow he should have failed to discover the young man's identity.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ROSA TELLS JOE WHAT SHE THINKS OF HIM.

On her way home Rosa was more than once tempted to turn back to the hospital, but she checked the impulse. She would not take the trolley-car. To avoid it, she walked the length of Fern Street to Circuit Square, crossed the Square at the juncture of Grove and Orchard Streets, and was then within a block of Klein's. So tired was she that she had to study the printed street names on the houses at street corners to learn exactly where she was. People who tried to waylay her for gossip she told dully that she was going home to sleep, that Kreppel was cured and would be discharged next day. Because she stopped before O'Connor's livery stable to get her bearings, Joe, who saw her from his office window, sheepishly came out. It took courage. Joe, however, was no coward and he meant well.

"Ain't ye got a word fer me, Rosa?" he asked.

Rosa glared. "Ja, I have."

"He hurt hisself," Joe said, indignant at her tone, "an' I'll have ye understand I ain't the scum o' the earth an' won't be treated as sech, neither—no matter what ye think! The byes was tryin' ter draw him out, loosenin' his tongue wid th' drink, an' I was tryin' ter prevint 'em—s'elp me Gawd A'mighty!"

On Rosa's raw nerves every word cut like a whip lash. To let go her tongue and once and for all tell O'Connor her opinion of him was an incalculable relief. Against Joe's office door she leaned for support, steadying herself by her grasp on the door-knob.

"Nein," she said in response to his gesture of invitation, "I won't go in and sit down. I can say what I think of you right here."

Her voice was hoarse; her eyes were flaming.

"Do you know, O'Connor, what it is to love something that you never had before in all your life and you needed just because the man-beasts that you know all your life haven't got it? I tell you that to cook for man-beasts like you and to wait on man-beasts like you in the restaurant will make a good girl love a gentleman when she sees one."

Passionately she struck her breast.

"Do you know that I love Emil because he never tried to kiss me—never put his arm around my waist and his drunken breath close under my nose, like the man-beasts? I am not a lady, but a gentleman like Kreppel treats all women like ladies—like the great ladies he knows. Emil did not want to hurt me when he learned that I have no mother and my father is all the time with his eyes closed in his mug of beer, seeing nothing when the customers try to kiss Rosa. You know what Hummel was discharged for? He was a man-beast worse than the other man-beasts, and would do me the worst harm, but I would not let him—*aber, nichts!*"

O'Connor's face was as white as hers.

"I did not know that about Hummel."

"You did not? Ach, you did not look and did

not care," the woman said bitterly. "You care only when you see that I love Emil. The man-beasts like you do not protect women."

"Ye might have spoken the word, Rosa. I ain't the only man who would lick the feller insultin' ye."

Rosa flung wide her superb arms.

"Is there a man who comes to the restaurant that I can not take care of by myself? Nein!"

"Ye have plinty o' fightin' men ter love ye," Joe answered huskily, "so ye don't need ter go an' marry no kid too weak ter stan' on his own two legs an' give yesilf more'n yesilf ter look after. It's drink did it wid 'im. Over he tumbles after a smell o' the brandy bottle, an' dat I gives ye straight."

Rosa was ominously calm.

"Show me the customer who comes to the restaurant and don't drink," she said. "My man is one I can keep from drink, and he's the only one. The others may go to ——" the place to which she consigned them, roped in with adjectives, is not to be mentioned in polite letters—"and I do not care who the others are to suffer."

Joe's head dropped on his chest.

"It's Gawd's own troot ye spake now! Pervided yer kid goes free, ye don't care who suffers, Rosa. So ye won't fergive me failin' ter keep him from gettin' full dat night?"

She stared but did not answer.

"I'm no wuss nor any other feller. I knowed it was a put-up job," Joe confessed humbly.

Still Rosa stared at him.

"I didn't start the racket," he said in desperation, making a clean breast. "Mebbe, ye can't fergit in a hurry an' think ye can't fergive. But he'll soon

be well an' round agin', so after that fergivin'll come easier ter ye. Ye ain't the fergivin' sort, I'm afeard, Rosa."

Rosa lifted her fist as if to strike him. Manfully O'Connor stood his ground.

"*Ich?*—I forgive a man that would take from me—*alles?*" she cried. "And I hate you! And I will not see your wicked face again! And never will I speak to you! *Gott in Himmel*, that I should have you before my eyes to-day in the street! *Geh! Geh!*"

She could bear no more. Irritability from emotional shock, with lack of sleep, half maddened her. O'Connor slunk back into his office. Familiar as he was with Rosa's temper, he had not seen her so thoroughly infuriated before and he feared for her reason. Her face was again become haggard and drawn. She forgot her joy at Kreppel's recovery, forgot that in all probability he was to be taken home in two days. All she thought of was to reach home herself and vent her rage on any creature that she might find in her path. Her father met her at the restaurant door.

"Ach, R-rrosa, it is good to see thee come!" he cried in German. His face was wreathed in smiles. The smiles gave way to terror.

"What has happened to thee? Is thy man worse?"

"He is well—well! The day after to-morrow he comes home cured."

She dropped exhausted into a chair.

"I don't know what makes me so angry with Joe O'Connor," she said, speaking her mother tongue while panting. "But thou wilt not ask me to see

him again, Papachen—I can not! He must not come here. What do we care for his custom!”

On a nearby table she brought her fist down with a blow that made the cruets and other furnishings dance.

“He must not come again to this restaurant,” she repeated with yet greater emphasis of rattling china, that, to say the least, was convincing. “Thou hast to choose, Papachen, Emil and thy daughter, or—him!”

Old Klein, too, had borne as much as he was able. Taut to the breaking point, his nerves were less overstrained only than Rosa’s.

“Thinkest thou that I will run this restaurant for thee and the dumb-head alone?” he growled at her. “Ordering thy old father to ruin, indeed! That’s fine business! Get to bed. Sleep, and thy sense will come back. Our troubles began on the day that I discharged Hummel and took Emil as waiter.”

Rosa looked murderous.

“Be careful, father!”

“What has come over thee?” old Klein whined. “Art thou not glad that thy man is cured? Has the most noble highborn Herr Doktor not told thee that thou must make a quiet home for thy poor old father and thy man to live in peace? Thy troubles are ended. The accident has not killed Kreppel, and now he is cured by the hospital.”

He peered at her dubiously.

“Thou hearest what I say? God in heaven, R-rrosa, thou art not listening! I tell thee to go quick to bed, and remember only that thy troubles are done. We will talk another day about O’Connor.”



"We will talk now, and never, never speak of O'Connor after this night. Let Joe come here once, and Emil and I walk out and leave thee. Choose!"

Her voice was broken—hoarse with passion. Color again flamed in her cheeks. From within black circles her sunken eyes darted forth their old fire. Save for Klein and herself, the restaurant was empty. Then the door was jerked open and Doctor Howard walked in.

"Come, come!" he said. "None of this nonsense, Klein! Why are you two people quarreling? What Mrs. Kreppel wants is sleep."

Rosa turned on him calmly desperate. Her head was held high and she carried it well back. Squaring her great shoulders, she stood up slowly to meet a blow. "What are you come for, Herr Doktor? To tell me my man is dead?"

"Come for? Why, supper. What does any man want in a restaurant?" Howard answered laughing. "I've brought you a dose that you're to take immediately. Let somebody else serve supper."

He took a chair facing her, and again laughed reassurance.

"Dead? Not he! But he's sleeping like Rip Van Winkle—good for twenty years. Twenty hours, anyhow! It looks like it. The sleep of the just and the convalescent! When he wakes, you're to take him home—cured. What do you say to that, Mrs. Kreppel?"

From a jug on one of the tables he filled a glass with water, then thrust his thumb and index finger into his waistcoat pocket and brought out a pill-box.

"Take two tablets. I've come all the way to bring them," he said. "If within an hour you're not asleep

take one more; if that shouldn't work take another. I sha'n't leave the box with you."

She shoved him from her roughly.

"Look out!" he said, with entire good humor. "You've spilt the water. Now, I shall insist on seeing you swallow those tablets before I go.

Her haggard young face flushed, shamed by his professional amiability. She could not understand why he did not throw the pill-box at her head.

"I could not help thinking that you had come to tell me my man was dead, Herr Doktor," she explained humbly. "Yes; I will take your medicine. Are you sure Emil is sleeping?"

"As sure as I am that you are not and that you need it even more than he."

"*In Gottes namen*, make her to sleep so sound that her tongue will be quiet in her head!" Klein muttered in German.

Rosa gave him a look of contempt and gulped down the drug in a draught of beer.

"No water, Herr Doktor, thank you! That is too much like taking medicine. Ach, it goes against me to put in my throat queer flat bits of a stuff I don't know!"

"You'll have to take my word for it that the stuff is good for you."

She veered round instantly and held out her hand.

"I will take your word, Herr Doktor."

"Thank you, Mrs. Kreppel. Good night!"

Howard left. He had snatched only a bite of supper, and Rosa's hospitable soul felt remorse. She was, however, too tired to feel anything so much as her extreme fatigue. In beginning to act, the drug numbed her senses.

"I think, Papachen, I shall go to bed," said she heavily, and heavily she climbed the flight of stairs to her room. Kreppel was sleeping, she would sleep, and both he and she would wake made over new.

It would not do for her to sleep too long, so she struggled against the feeling of exhaustion of the brain-cells. It seemed as though, shrunken and thought-weary, they withdrew one by one from the action that she tried to wring from them to the last. She must sleep; she would sleep, of course. Only, please God, was her last drowsily childish appeal, not to let her oversleep! Was it twelve hours that the Herr Doktor said Emil was good for—eighteen—twenty? Kreppel had the advantage of her. Several hours of his allotted portion were already gone. She wished she had not taken the drug. She might not wake on time. She wished that she had taken nothing to make her fee-el so-o sle-le-ee-py.

Her thoughts trailed off into merciful oblivion.

**HISTORY TWO**  
**RE-ENTER GEORGE SAVIDGE**  
**XII————XIX.**



*"When the combinations which are brought about as the result of cerebral activity, between the various mental integers reach a certain volume and degree of intensity, they are collectively designated consciousness. This term, as well as many others in the psychological dictionary, is relative, and a separate definition must be found for each case."—Paton.*



## CHAPTER XII.

### THE PATIENT IN NUMBER THREE.

The patient in Room Number Three, of North Harrow Hospital, stirred and woke.

So quiet was the slight motion of his head on the pillow in waking that the nurse, whose back was turned to leave him after a casual inspection on her way to the general ward, did not know his eyes were open. They were very wide open indeed, and he rubbed them to make sure that he was not dreaming.

His sleep had been profound. From abyss to abyss, by slow stages of the waking process, he seemed mentally to have climbed in reaching solid earth; and here he was in bed in a strange hospital—for, evidently, it was a hospital—with a strange woman in nurse's uniform going about a nurse's duties unaware that he, George Savidge, was staring at her utterly amazed.

Of all remarkable experiences his was the most extraordinary. Had he been knocked senseless and been carried unconscious to a hospital? It was the only explanation he could find. He discovered that he could move his legs. He felt weak but not ill. Gingerly he fingered along his sides for evidence of



internal injury. He found none. There were no bandages on him anywhere. So far as he could understand, he lay helpless from the shock of surprise and no other. His poor mother, father, sister, Diana—where were they? Did they know where he was? No hospital was within several miles of his home. He supposed that he had his watch, a little money, and, he trusted, some visiting-cards for identification; or had he been drugged and then robbed? Another possible explanation—that; but one scarcely to hold water, for if drugged merely to be robbed and otherwise unharmed, why was he in bed at a hospital? What hospital? Where was it? If he called a nurse to him quietly to ask the question would she think him mad? He would risk it.

But he did not have to call. A nurse passing along the corridor—a pretty young woman with brown eyes and an attractive smile—looked in at the door and saw he was awake. She went to him quickly. Beaming with satisfaction, she leaned over the bed.

“How rested you look!” she said. “Poor fellow! You want to ask for something and can’t. I only wish I understood you! Wait a bit. I’ll go call the doctor, and he’ll send for you——”

Savidge seized her skirt. She was moving away.

“Don’t go! Don’t call anybody!” he besought her. “I want to ask a question or two. Where am I?”

“What!?”

The astonishment coupled with scorn on the pretty nurse’s face were unmistakable.

“So you speak English after all, Mr. Kreppel?”

she said slowly. "You pretended you couldn't only to fool us. That wasn't nice of you."

Savidge was hopelessly at sea.

"I don't know what you mean, I'm sure. "What language did you think I spoke? Was I delirious?"

"Not lately."

Cool unconcern settled on the nurse's features. Whether or not the patient were shamming she did not care. Though the man looked like a gentleman, impostors were not unknown to the hospital.

"Should you like your wife sent for?" she inquired still more coldly.

"My wife!!"

"Yes, *your* wife—poor thing!"

The nurse whisked her skirt from his detaining hand.

"Next you'll be saying you haven't a wife and that you're not Emil Kreppel! Thank goodness, here comes the doctor! Mr. Kreppel is awake, Doctor Howard, and is suddenly able to speak English. You won't need Mrs. Kreppel to help you talk."

Savidge sat bolt upright. He was trembling.

"Are you the doctor? Please, then, tell me who it is I'm supposed to be. Who is Emil Kreppel?"

Intense interest sharpened Howard's features. The hand that he laid on the patient's arm shook.

"You are entered in this hospital as 'Emil Kreppel.' Isn't it your name? Think! Don't answer before you're quite certain of what you are saying, and don't be confused by our having mistaken your identity. You were ill and are now well. All that you have to do is to make clear to me who and what you are. There is no occasion for excitement."

"I am not excited."

Savidge put tremendous restraint on himself to speak calmly.

"Thank you for taking this tone with me, doctor. 'I'm a little weak, it seems; therefore, as you say so, I suppose that I've been ill. How long have I been a patient here? If there's any mistake I shall have no difficulty in proving my identity.'"

He looked round the room.

"Where are my clothes? My watch ought to be in my waistcoat pocket, and my card-case somewhere."

Howard kept his finger on the young fellow's pulse.

"When you were brought here you wore no watch. If a watch and a card-case were in your pockets at the time of the accident, your property is in the hands of your wife. I've sent for her. She'll be here at any moment."

Savidge blushed guiltily red. The blood mounted, indeed, to his very forehead.

"I assure you, doctor, that I am unmarried," he said earnestly. "There is no woman with the least claim on me—excepting—er—my mother and my sister."

Howard looked stern.

"We shall see," he said. "My present concern is with you, Kreppel. Your relations with the unfortunate woman who informs me that she is your wife are not to be discussed lightly." He turned to the nurse. "Before Mrs. Kreppel arrives I should like the room to ourselves, Miss Jennings, if you please."

"Certainly, doctor!"

The pretty nurse walked off with her nose in the air. When she was gone, Howard took out his notebook carefully to jot down his questions and the patient's replies.

"Your name?"

"George Savidge," the young man answered promptly.

Howard noted it.

"At any time known as 'Emil Kreppel'?"

"Never!! Doctor, I——" He broke off short. "Who is that woman who has just come in?"

The agitated whisper Rosa did not hear. Not to disturb the two men she had come noiselessly into the room. The nurse had told her Emil was awake, and in pity told nothing else. After the first hesitating step over the door-jamb, she stood rooted for very happiness unable to walk further. Her ears drank the sound of her man's voice. The doctor was speaking, so she would not interrupt. She saw Emil's eyes without reading their expression; for never before had she seen his face so alive with intelligence, vivid in its portrayal of changing emotions. He was well, and at last he knew what he was about! Conscious that he saw her, she came diffidently forward. "Mein Engel," she said, "to-day it is that we go home." She spoke in German.

From Rosa's beautiful radiant face to the stony mask worn by the surgeon, Savidge turned in boyish appeal.

"What does she say? It's German, I know. As I haven't spoken the language since I was a kid, I've forgotten nearly every word. Translate, doctor, please."

In consternation Howard looked at the woman.

Rosa's eyes bulged with horror and her jaw dropped. A grayish pallor like a veil overspread her face till all that made her beautiful was blotted out.

"Thou speakest English? Thou are not yet well, then, Emil?"

Still she addressed him in German, but at his dismay she made a touching effort to employ the new medium of communication that he was using.

"Then, Emil, you are not yet well?" she repeated as meaninglessly as if English were an unknown tongue; for why should her man pretend not to understand her?

Rosa's wits were quick only in the field where they had always full play. Women of her class can not on a sudden be transported from their accustomed environment and adjust themselves immediately to changed conditions. They can not command their faculties at once. Rosa marshalled hers slowly. Kreppel, it would seem, knew English and had deceived her into believing that he did not know it. What his purpose was she neither guessed nor cared. She felt blindly that she was making a mistake which offended him, and she regretted letting the Herr Doktor see the mistake.

"It is all right, Herr Doktor—all right!" she told Howard. "Let me talk to my man by myself—*bitte!*"

Lest Howard might refuse her she was in agony, but dared not speak as she would to a customer in her father's restaurant. If she might be alone with Emil—might take him home—home! Why should any other than herself know that he had deceived her? It was her business. Hers and his, perhaps,

yet more particularly hers. She would tell Emil that to her it did not matter.

Her man spoke. His face was ghastly white, but his manner showed good breeding and a self-control for which poor Rosa the more admired him. He addressed the surgeon.

"I repeat, Doctor Howard, that I do not know this—er—lady."

In Rosa's presence, with her sorrowing eyes fixed on his face, he could not call her anything else, and he spoke with a courtesy so undreamed of in her crude general notion of the art of giving pain with the tongue that she turned a trifle faint. The faintness was momentary. Kreppel was, of course, out of his head. How stupid of the Herr Doktor not to see it! But she would not be angry any more. Crazy or not crazy she loved her man, and, as he was not violent, caring for him at home would be a simple matter. The difficulty was to get him there. In that she needed the Herr Doktor's help; for if the most noble, highborn Herr Doktor could be persuaded that Emil was not dangerous, he would get his discharge from the hospital and send him home. The Herr Doktor must see that she could humor the invalid. She would try cunning.

"Tell me what he must have to make him well? He speaks English, Herr Doktor—*natürlich!* I did not know, so I am surprised. He learns English, 'mein Mann,' and will not tell me to surprise me—*ganz natürlich!* You think he does not know me? *Aber*, that is no harm. It's the hospital. I take him back home; and I cure him without even the highborn Herr Doktor; and I am not afraid. My man will be all right in a few days," she said.

"What do you want, Kreppel?"

Howard spoke pleasantly.

"Will you go back home with Mrs. Kreppel, or do you persist in your statement that there has been a mistake? What step will you take to prove your identity?"

The patient clenched his hands. Everything depended on his powers of self-control, he thought, but he could not hurt the woman who pleaded with him to recognize her as his wife. It was evident that the doctor had no intention of obliging Mrs. Kreppel to leave the room. The young man fixed his eyes, therefore, on the surgeon and resolved to be calm, entirely logical and convincing. His personal liberty was at stake. Howard seemed a man of education. Was he a gentleman and would he accept the statement of one of Savidge's class? Rosa heard her man say:

"I am George Savidge, Doctor Howard, son of the well-known Doctor William Schofield Savidge, one-time professor of nervous diseases at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, in the city of New York, and now for some years retired from active practice and living on his country estate in a little place called Schofield Falls in the State of New York."

Imperturbably Howard wrote it down.

"Schofield Falls," he said, writing, "is but eighteen miles west of North Harrow. We are at North Harrow, the county seat. Doctor William Schofield Savidge is a distinguished man and my former teacher at the P. and S. I shall 'phone him word of your case. Are you satisfied?"

"Perfectly!"

The young fellow sank back exhausted. Rosa's

intelligence was informed, then, through love, and she felt part of the truth. The most highborn Herr Doktor was trying to do right by her and Emil, equally. Meanwhile, she must not in any wise interfere with the Herr Doktor's plans. She stood very straight and noble, turning a calm face to the door. Howard stood irresolute.

"I go now, Herr Doktor."

"You go, Mrs. Kreppel?"

Howard's voice shook for pity. His nerves were not of cast iron, and into the things of life he saw, as he believed, further than did the splendid creature confronting him.

"Where do you go?" he asked her.

"Home," she said. "My father is waiting for news, and I must make ready for my man to come. He is not so excited and will soon be well. The other Herr Doktor will come that you sent for?"

Howard bowed her out.

"You take the wisest course, Mrs. Kreppel. I'll investigate the case thoroughly, and you couldn't do better than to use your philosophy."

Warmly he shook her hand.

"Count me your friend," he said, "whatever happens."

Again Rosa was cunning.

"Nothing will happen, Herr Doktor. My man will have his senses when I get him home. The fall on his head hurt him, so he is long to get well of it."

"Quite so! Quite so! Trust me, Mrs. Kreppel, to let you know what you're to do after I've heard from Doctor Schofield Savidge. Good idea, that—to occupy yourself with your various duties at home! We'll unravel this mystery in no time, and I'll let



you know what Doctor Savidge has to say. Trust me!"

Under Rosa's long look of scrutiny Howard reddened.

"I believe," she said slowly, "and I trust the Herr Doktor."

"Thank you, Mrs. Kreppel. You have all my sympathy. I——"

But Rosa was not listening. She could entertain only one idea at a time, and her thoughts were intent on her slowly moving purpose to get her man for herself. Emil must be taken home. The Herr Doktor had to be trusted, for the reason that he demanded trust. She was determined, if possible, not to offend the Herr Doktor while she and Kreppel were in his power. For so impetuous a nature her composure was extraordinary and imposed its own dignity. In silence she left the hospital, no one venturing to speak to her, and on the way home she formulated the explanation that she would give Klein.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### READJUSTMENTS.

"Emil is well, Rosa? We take him to-day home from the hospital?"

Klein stood with legs apart, head sidewise, puffing his pipe in the doorway of the restaurant. Thus firmly planted he felt at less disadvantage with his daughter.

"Emil," she said unemotionally, removing her hat and coat, which she tossed to a chair, "is not yet cured. The fall on the head was a bad hurt. I might have known it would be for long. To-day he does not know me."

Klein took his pipe from his mouth and stared at her.

"So-o-oo, R-rrosa? He was crazy at first and did not know thee, and was cured. Is he crazy now once more again, Rosa? Has he the fever again?"

"No fever," she said shortly. "He looks well. He is quiet and very happy—but he thinks he is somebody else."

Klein knocked the ashes from his pipe.

"God in heaven!" plaintively he said, "all that is very interesting what you tell me there, Rosa. Emil thinks he is somebody else? The idea is not so bad. It would not be bad if it was true—eh, Rosa?"

"It is not true." Her voice was evenly monot-

onous. "It is a trick of the hospital, Papachen. They try to learn his secrets. I saw the Herr Doktor's face, and I will not trust the Herr Doktor. I tell him that I trust, but I will not."

She flung her arms above her head. "Shame to him for wanting to know what my man has done!" she cried. "Nobody shall know it. A hospital's business is to make people well."

Her voice dropped to its former monotonous level.

"I come home to make ready for him his room. He can sit up in bed, so he shall sit in our bed—his wife's bed—for I am his wife. In a little while he will again be strong enough to walk in the house; then he will be so soon strong that he can walk in the street; then he will be cured. To-night I go back to the hospital to bring him home."

Klein shifted his position uneasily.

"If he is crazy," he said, "leave him where he is in the hospital, Rosa. I will not have him home."

Rosa's eyes darkened ominously, then glittered.

"But—I want him.

Klein temporized.

"How knowest thou that he is really crazy?" he asked weakly. "Has the Herr Doctor told thee such a thing?"

Her answers were short—jerked out. She spat passion. "What is it to me—to thee? Emil speaks no more German, but speaks English; and he does not know his wife. This house is his home. Let him come to it. If he is crazy he can be crazy here; I can nurse him here. I will cure him. The Herr Doctor can not cure. My man will get well after he is with me."

"There, there!" Klein said distressed. "Thou shalt have thy way, Röschen. Nobody will prevent thee. How soon wilt thou bring him home?"

"To-night."

"To-night it shall be," old Klein said soothingly. "I will go to-night myself to see the Herr Doktor at the hospital, Rosa."

Rosa gave him a suspicious look. His manner was unctious, smoothly beguiling, but his voice trembled. His heavy under lip shook as if with palsy. He was afraid of Kreppel.

"Thou shalt go surely, father, if I need thee. I think, however, I will go alone," she said. "I am not afraid of my man because he is crazy. In his own home he will be well. I go now the room for him ready to make, Papachen."

She disappeared upstairs. Klein heard her move about, and he knew that Rosa must be doing what she said. He dropped into a chair, covering his face with his hands.

Savidge, too, lay with his face covered in his bare little room at the hospital and in his narrow hospital bed, trying to conjure up a picture of his home. Howard had gone to the telephone, and the patient was temporarily left to his own devices. The image of Rosa thrust itself on his mind. Do what he would, he could not be rid of it. What were his relations with the woman—if any? Must he believe her story of marriage with some man named Kreppel, resembling him? Howard appeared to give it credence. Was there possibly a man so like him as to deceive this poor crazied woman, and had that man, his double, unexpectedly died and doctor and nurses not wished to tell the wife in the other

patients' hearing? They chose to make use of him, Savidge, for the moment, rather than to drive a woman raving mad where her howls would seriously disturb the sick and the dying. Indeed, the young fellow was not a little proud to have evolved so neat an explanation from his slight material. It proved him to be in possession of his faculties. How cleverly Doctor Howard had induced Mrs. Kreppel to leave by humoring her delusion! Savidge knew of no insane asylum at North Harrow but was aware that there was a good general hospital. He respected the hospital surgeon. On Howard's return, his patient welcomed him with a smile and a sigh of relief.

"I can't get that poor woman—Mrs. Kreppel, you said she was—from my mind, doctor. Is she insane, do you think?"

Howard looked grave.

"Wait till Doctor Savidge comes. We sha'n't discuss her yet," he said. I've written, sent the letter, and have 'phoned."

"You have?"

The young man quivered with intensity of expectation. Again fearful of the impression he might be making, he closed his eager eyes.

"Tell me more—please! Did you get Diana—Miss Vaughan—on the wire?"

"Miss Vaughan was not at home. I got a servant and, finally, the professor himself. I prefer not to tell you what Doctor Savidge said. He will be here shortly."

"He's coming? At least, you can tell me if he's anxious about his son!"

"He is very anxious about his son."

The patient drew a long, sobbing breath.

"You think, doctor, that I'm not frank with you and don't deserve frankness in return. I'll tell willingly all that I know about my life, but I can't tell you anything about the poor woman who was here a while ago. I've never before set eyes on her and don't want to again. Although she is very beautiful"—stopping, he shuddered—"I can't look her in the face. Her expression is too awful; it's heart-breaking. You think I'm to blame; don't you? God knows I'd help her in any way I could!"

"We'll wait till Doctor Savidge comes," Howard repeated. "Don't talk of Mrs. Kreppel; tell me about yourself."

For an instant Savidge hesitated; then rapidly, confidently, he went on without a break in the simple thread of his story.

"I've told you of father. Who and what he is you know as well as I. I am his first child and only son. My sister Charlotte is two years younger than myself. I was born when my parents were abroad in Germany, and lived there for the first eight years of my life. Father on his return to the United States was in active practice in New York, till his health gave out under the strain. He is now an old man. For the past three years he has retired from teaching and from practice and been living the year round at Schofield Falls. He loves the country, and his health is wonderfully improved since he became a farmer.

"Mother is not particularly robust and Charlotte is a little trump in devotion to her. The star member of the family, however, is my cousin by adoption, Diana Vaughan, an orphaned daughter of my

father's dearest friend. She has made her home with us ever since I can remember."

Howard was amazed. "Is that all?" The baldness of the narrative stamped it for truth. Liars elaborate.

"It's all I can think of as really important," the young fellow said wearily. "How I got here I don't know, so no amount of questioning can drag forth that information. Why won't you wait, doctor? When father comes he'll tell his end of the story; the middle can be pieced out by you and him together. When did he say he'd get here?"

"As quickly as possible."

"They'll take the motor then—Di and he. Mother is afraid of motors."

It could not be acting; it was far too well done and the homeliness of detail too masterly. Howard believed he was in the presence of George Savidge, and did not require the corroboration of Doctor Savidge's few broken sentences over the telephone to convince him that the young man's disappearance from his home at Schofield Falls, eighteen miles distant, coincided with the appearance twenty-four hours later of Emil Kreppel at Klein's restaurant in North Harrow. Doctor Howard's buoyant self-sufficiency was gone. He dared not inform young Savidge of anything about his life as Kreppel; dared not question him further. He trembled in terror of Rosa Kreppel forcing her way into the hospital to make a scene before Doctor Savidge should arrive. Why had Doctor Savidge failed to find his son so near at hand? Much was to be explained later. While Howard's professional curiosity was wrought to the highest pitch he was, nevertheless, helpless in

the grip of a situation without precedent in his experience. Indeed, he was very like a small boy drinking in some marvellous fairy tale.

"Don't go! Don't leave me, doctor!" the patient implored him. "It's my turn to ask questions."

"I must," Howard said hastily. "I've work to do. One of the nurses may sit in the room, if you wish, or she'll be within call outside."

"I'd rather have her outside. I want to think. Whatever you do, don't let in Mrs. Kreppel!"

"I shall not."

Savidge closed his eyes. It was easier to think with them shut on the unfamiliar surroundings. He was becoming used to the place to the point of being able to abstract himself and more clearly to recall the house at Schofield Falls. The absurd insistence with which unfamiliar objects force themselves on one's attention to the exclusion of the familiar is an acknowledged fact. For example, it was extremely difficult to see in his mind's eye Diana, whose every feature he knew as he knew his own, instead of the strange tragic face of Mrs. Kreppel seen for but five minutes. True, all associations with Diana were entrancing, while the other woman had given him a disagreeable shock. It soothed him to lie in a waking dream and see in imagination his father's library, one of the beautiful rooms of a beautiful house, walled with books in sumptuous bindings that every member of the family felt free to dip into as he or she would. The joys of rainy days in that library were not readily forgotten.

Diana was a bookworm—"the early bookworm," the family used laughingly to call her, from her habit of reading before breakfast and her love of



rare old first editions. That she refused to read any but first editions, and said she liked best to handle books which had belonged to great men before finding a place in Doctor Savidge's library, was part of her bewitching girlish priggishness. It was astonishing how many presentation copies of great English, German and French authors to their families and bosom friends wriggled their way through the auction rooms into this library of an American gentleman in an unknown American hamlet—for Schofield Falls had not the respectable dimensions even of a village. Diana's favorite seat in the library was the top rung of a ladder set "cat-cornered"—"puss-in-the-cornered," the family said—between the immense stone chimney and a big north window through which the light streamed over her left shoulder. George mused, smiling at the fact that she was particular about that light over her left shoulder. A bundle of enthusiasms bound in silks and rich brocades, gold-clasped, like her special copies of Browning's first poems, the "Poems by Two Brothers," her Rostand, and her Maeterlinck, Diana loved fine linen, while purple was her favorite color.

The longer Savidge thought of the girl the clearer became the picture. He could see Diana in her riding-skirt on her Rosinante dashing 'cross country to tilt, as she said, at windmills; but when dressed she was very much dressed indeed, and wore lustrous materials in classic folds on her long lithe body. She was exceedingly slender and tall, with a face too long for beauty but not for distinction, and she had a most exquisite wild-rose color that paled or deepened with every change of emotion.

Her eyes were blue, so dark as to look purple when she wore it. That was why she preferred the violet shades to other colors. When not in evening dress, she would wear anything roughly debonair and look like a princess on an escapade. The distinction that Miss Vaughan lent her clothes she was never under the necessity to borrow from them.

Yet her energy of body and mind led her to be as absorbed in an anise-seed bag hunt as in deciphering a black-letter Chaucer. With her keen enjoyment of living she was not selfish in the household. She gave thought to her aunt's comfort, George remembered; over-ruled the servants by guiding Charlotte through domestic pitfalls in house-keeping, and her uncle depended on her for intellectual diversion. Of late, the son of the house thought, jealously, she had grown away from him closer to his father. Certainly she sought the father's companionship rather than the son's, and George resented it. Perhaps, she discovered him wading with impertinent feet "where the brook and river meet" on man's estate before he was quite come into his own and, in consequence, he must often have been a tiresomely crude young person to a woman three months his senior, with marked intellectual attainments. But if word could be got to Diana that he was in any trouble she would "see him through," would manage that his mother need not be frightened, that Charlotte be quiet, and that his father would come to him with as little delay as possible. She would not allow Doctor Savidge to suffer an unnecessary pang.

All this reminded the young man that he did not know how long he had been away from home.

Could he ask the nurse outside his door? He was ashamed to call her. If only Howard would come again, George would ask him in roundabout fashion. What under the sun could have happened! His father must be worried nearly to death; his mother ill; Charlotte worn to a shadow, and poor plucky Di have the entire house on her shoulders. Diana would hold up every man and woman in it—if only she could! They must have searched for him and given him up for dead. North Harrow, only eighteen miles away, would of course be the first place for them to think that he might be in hiding. What was he doing in North Harrow? At most, he could not have been for more than a few hours in the hospital. Odd that the doctor did not say what ailed him! There was no attempt to have him up and dressed before his people should come, though he felt absolutely well. He did not dare stir from bed without permission. He was the unwitting cause of so much trouble already that he intended to sing as small as he could in order to be taken home. Time enough to learn what it was all about after he should get away!

Would Di come with his father? He had not asked the season of the year, the time of day, for shame at revealing his ignorance. All he could see was a piece of bright blue sky, many shades lighter than Diana's eyes, through the upper window-sash pulled down for air. It looked to him like a spring-tide sky, yet he could not know for certain. The air felt warm, the sash was drawn but a little way, so that it could not be really hot nor remarkably cold weather. It must be late afternoon. Since

Doctor Howard had left, the room had darkened and the shadows on the floor were longer.

What would Di say to this complication with the Kreppel woman? He would not tell his father but would confide the woman's accusation at once to Diana and get her to find out from doctor and nurses, or from the woman herself, what was meant by calling him Emil Kreppel and saying that he was married under that name. His mind harked back to his first theory, with the excuse that either he had been introduced into the hospital under circumstances to confound him with an earlier inmate named Kreppel, or that doctor and nurses were humoring a delusion of Mrs. Kreppel's. He remembered the nurse calling him Kreppel on his waking and her seeming astonishment at his speaking English. Kreppel, then, spoke only German, and Kreppel must be—or have been—a common man, the social equal of his handsome wife. Were mistakes such as that made in hospitals? Pretty rough on the patients! Red tape and enough of it would strangle any man's identity. He remembered his father's amusement at the visit of a telephone inspector who insisted that the former owner of their place at Schofield Falls had in the house a telephone which he had not ordered disconnected and, consequently, should pay for. In vain, Doctor Savidge assured the inspector of Clarence Montrose's death; that he was three years dead; that to his, Doctor Savidge's, knowledge Mr. Montrose could not be reached by telephone. The inspector persisted in his assertion:

"Mr. Montrose, doctor, is still on our books as having one of our instruments and has not ordered

his telephone disconnected; therefore, he has the telephone, and the company should like you to notify him, or to give us his present address in order that we may communicate with him directly. He must have our telephone. Our books show it."

"And by the same token," Savidge mused, "I must be Emil Kreppel. I am entered in this hospital as Emil Kreppel, not George Savidge. I am perfectly well and don't wish to be here at all. Still, like a sick man, I must wait in bed till my people come to identify me before I may be allowed to go home. What I should do is to get them to find Kreppel to take my place, and then to spirit me away as far as ever they can. Let's pray that he isn't three years dead, like poor Montrose, and can be reached by telephone!"

## CHAPTER XIV.

### DIANA THEORIZES.

Diana answered her uncle's summons to join him in his study, not letting her aunt and Charlotte know that she was sent for.

She went in quietly. Instead of her usual free step, she moved with a dejected dignity to show that she had borne much in a few weeks, had followed many a false clue, but was ready, nevertheless, to investigate again and again any evidence that her beloved uncle might have of George being still alive.

"What is it, uncle Will?"

With shaking hand he held out to her John Howard's letter.

"This came by special messenger. It has since been corroborated over the 'phone. John Howard is one of my old pupils. He called me up from North Harrow hospital. The boy is safe, Di."

"Uncle Will! Oh, uncle Will! I'm so, so glad for you!"

Her impetuosity returned and her face flushed. Tears started to her eyes. She flung herself at her uncle's knee where, with his arm round her and his head against hers, they read the letter together.

"We shall go for him in the car, of course," she said, "but Aunt Emma shouldn't be told till he's

actually in the house, and Charlotte mustn't suspect us."

"Can you manage it, Di?"

"Manage it? Certainly, I can! It *must* be managed."

"What should I do without you, dear!"

"You don't have to," she retorted mischievously for the first time in many weeks. "You have to do *with* me—which is better. When do we start?"

"At once. The car is at the south gate. I told Stanton not to bring it up to the house because of poor Emma. My suit-case is packed. Put your things into a hand-bag and have a servant get it to the car. Then walk with me along the road to the gate. First, however, tell your aunt and Charlotte that we're off on a fresh clue. No use holding out hope of our immediate return; for if I find that George ought not to be moved we'll stay. We may be two or three days at North Harrow. I don't care to send back for clothing, and don't intend to leave an address. The suspense will be hard on your aunt Emma, but to know that George is so near, particularly in a hospital recovering from an accident, might kill her."

"The letter, uncle, doesn't say that George is ill. It reads as if he were cured."

Doctor Savidge in great agitation walked the library floor.

"No matter, my dear—no matter! I understand George's state of health better than you. The letter says he has erysipelas."

"*Has* had it," Diana corrected by reading from the letter.

"Well, 'has had it.' It takes some time for erysipelas to fade quite away. His mother shouldn't see him, shouldn't know he's had a serious blow on the head. My God, what may it not mean to us!"

Diana got to her feet. She glided toward the door with a rustle of silk draperies. The tea-gown that she wore was of rich eastern stuff, a mass of embroidery, and it exaggerated her slender height. With the color now flooding her face she looked like some long-stemmed exotic flower.

"I must go and dress. But it may take time to quiet auntie and Charlotte, and to pack my things, uncle."

"Take the time you need. Those we leave behind are as precious as the dear lad we're going to. Wait, Diana! Let me have the telephone book, will you? My old friend, Connelly, lives at North Harrow. I'll 'phone him to meet us at the hospital."

"Doctor John Connelly, you mean? You believe, then, that George is very ill? I thought you talked with the hospital doctor on the 'phone and found out all about it?"

"I did. Young Howard has no experience in—er—certain cases, and is only a young fellow, anyway. Connelly is a distinguished man. I've consulted him before about George. Hurry, dear! You can't do anything for me here at present and I want you to see to your aunt. Then slip away and join me on the road to the south gate. We haven't a moment to lose in talk, Diana."

She threw her arms about his neck and kissed him.

"I know we haven't, uncle. Don't look so anxious,



dearest George is found and is safe. I'll send somebody to tell you when I'm ready, and I'll be waiting out on the carriage drive."

In an incredibly short time word was brought to Doctor Savidge that Miss Vaughan was ready. He found her on the driveway near the house, and together they went by a short cut to the disused south gate, where the motor-car snorted in ambush.

Doctor Savidge had the car closed and the window curtains partly drawn. Diana and he would be hidden from curious eyes. Also, he explained, they could talk in greater comfort and Stanton, the chauffeur, not overhear.

"Di," he said when they were fairly started, "did you see in Howard's letter a mention of some woman?"

The faintest flickering smile curled Diana's lip.

"Yes," she said, "but it's too absurd! George never looked at a woman but me, you know."

"You don't believe he could have gone off with one from here?"

"George!! Why, uncle Will, you must be crazy!"

"Howard writes as though George were married to her."

"Under a fictitious name? Yes, I read that part of the letter and found it interesting."

"It may have happened, Di."

Diana flushed. "Do you think that George would do anything low, uncle?"

"Not if he knew it."

"He couldn't take a false name and marry a woman not knowing it."

Hope died from within her eyes. Taking her

uncle's hand she held it with yearning tenderness against her heart.

"We may be disappointed again, uncle Will, and find only Emil Kreppel—not George Savidge."

"I've thought of that, Diana, so I'm preparing you. It's possible that this is another fool's errand, my dear."

"It's possible."

She looked sidewise at him; then, with feminine audacity jumped into the midst of the facts that he had presented, scattering them broadcast while triumphantly enumerating them:

"You said: 'The boy is safe.' You said: 'Doctor John Howard, of North Harrow hospital, is one of your old pupils.' You said: 'Doctor Howard's letter was 'corroborated' by a talk over the 'phone.'"

"I know, my dear, I know!"

The old physician's head sank forward on his chest.

"I 'said' all that, Diana; but there are things I have not said—strange, wonderful things that may have happened."

"Do you hope that the man we're going to see isn't George?"

"I am hoping he is. I have every hope and every fear, dear child."

"A-hh!"

Diana nestled into her capacious corner of the car. After her exclamation she said no more.

"Uncle," she thought, with the impertinence of the modern girl, "is a 'gentleman of the old school.' Poor dear, of course he is! He's thinking of that woman, and fears George may have 'wronged' her. Gentlemen of the old school always take the woman's

side. It's a chivalrous instinct they can't overcome. George's clean record counts for nothing with his old-school father. Now, I know the world and that 'mere man' shouldn't be made to shoulder the whole blame." She had read Ibsen and Bernard Shaw—I'll ask George about the woman, and by his answers I'll soon tell how much he's in the wrong—if at all. George is clean-souled, and isn't going to develop into anything else on slight provocation."

"He denies it," she said unexpectedly aloud.

"Eh? What's that?"

Doctor Savidge turned round.

"Who denies anything, Diana? What are you talking about?"

"George. Doctor Howard expressly states that George denies any association with the unfortunate woman, claiming that he never even saw her till she forced her way, in the doctor's presence, into George's room at the hospital."

"Oh, the woman!" I wasn't thinking of her."

The old doctor sighed.

"I ought to, I suppose, Diana. She may introduce fresh complications."

Diana was as round-eyed as any child.

"You weren't thinking of the woman, uncle Will?"

"No. Were you?"

He smiled candidly into her eyes—a whimsical, kindly physician's smile—and the girl felt snubbed.

"I was thinking," she said, "that you—you feared poor George might be to blame, but I was hoping you wouldn't judge him harshly. Often, it's the woman's fault, uncle, and not the man's—particularly if the woman is the elder."

"Bless the girl! How much she knows of 'LIFE!'"

Diana was piqued.

"I may not have seen much; but, certainly, I'm well read!"

"You are indeed!"

"There are many things," she retorted, "that one is the better for learning from books and not from experience. What were you thinking, uncle?"

"I can't tell you, dear—not yet. Doctor Connelly and I—with, possibly, Doctor Howard—must see George at first without you, Di; then I'll call you in."

"You're afraid he's alarmingly ill, so you don't give a thought to the woman."

One of Miss Vaughan's peculiarities was seeing a question from all sides.

"There may be nothing bad in her, uncle, and she may really suffer through imagining that she has some claim on George. It needs another woman to straighten out the tangle. Poor creature! I'll do what I can for her," she said.

He would not continue the subject.

"Here we are in town. Look, Diana! You don't know North Harrow."

They parted the window curtains and looked out. For motoring and for horseback riding, Diana chose the open country. She and Rosinante delighted to pick their way through the thickest woods. With the highly cultivated young woman's dislike of any substitute for either the heart of nature or a true metropolis, she avoided smug-like civilization. Shopping expeditions took her in the motor-car to

New York, but pleasure and exercise were indulged in afield.

Her uncle pointed to a hideous brick building.

"That makes the town, Di—its one industry."

"What?"

"A shoe factory."

Diana's pretty toes curled in contempt inside her hand-sewed patent-kid walking pumps, and her head was disdainfully tiptilted.

"Horrid place! A lot of people, I suppose, need them, and will have them. Whose make? Only see, uncle! There's the sign. How funny!"

She declaimed it:

KINGSLEY'S

FLEXIBLE-SOLED, VENTILATED, WATER-TIGHT,  
CORN-AND-BUNION-PROOF GOLD DOLLAR SHOE.  
THE ONLY DOLLAR SHOE ON THE MARKET  
WORTH A WHOLE GOLD DOLLAR, AND NO MIS-  
TAKE!

TRAMPING MILLIONS WEAR THEM.

WHY NOT YOU?

NOT TO WEAR KINGSLEY'S SHOES MEANS THE  
DECLINE OF WALKING.

The car kept at a sober pace down North Harrow's main street to Circuit Square.

"There's a prosperous looking livery stable," said interested Diana, and read: "Joseph H. O'Connor, Livery. Horses and vehicles, spick and span, at any hour of the day or night." The man must do a good business. Here we come to a saloon, don't we? No, it's a restaurant and German at that."

She pressed the spring that opened the glass front of the car, and spoke to the chauffeur.

"Quite a German population, Stanton; isn't there?"

"Yes, miss—fairish. Many on 'em works up to the shoe factory we passed. Yes, miss."

"Thank you, Stanton."

She clutched Doctor Savidge's arm.

"Do read the sign on the undertaker's 'establishment' across the street, uncle Will! It faces Klein's restaurant."

"Gustav Schiel. Undertakers' Supplies. Pinking Promptly Done. Awnings and Camp-chairs Rented. Weddings and Funerals in the Best New York Style."

Slowly they passed the Court House, which Diana admired for its stately colonial simplicity. At the head of Fern Street loomed the hospital. Man and girl became silent. The girl flushed, but the old doctor turned pale. Diana could feel his fingers icy in her grasp. Her hands, too, were cold, and she trembled.

"We shall know the worst in a moment," he said, trying to smile at her.

"Or the best," she answered gaily, and succeeded in smiling. "I wish I could understand what you're afraid of for George, uncle dear."

Without answer he pressed her hand. The car stopped before the hospital, and a benign white-haired gentleman came to meet them.

"How are you, Connelly? You know my niece, Miss Vaughan? This is Doctor John Connelly, Diana, whom you've met, I believe. The boy, they say, Connelly, is——"

He broke down. Diana and Doctor Connelly helped him into the reception-room where another

doctor was waiting—the hospital surgeon, Diana thought, and she was right.

Than the hospital reception-room no place could be more cheerless. It was long, narrow and dark. At the darker end, a flexible, hooded electric lamp bent snake-like above the pages of "histories" that an almost double-headed, pompadoured girl typist was hammering from her machine. The girl's shirt-waist had stiff-starched sleeves to the elbow, and from the glaring white muslin her soiled forearms jangled with bangles out of tune with the writing-machine's steady click. The girl stared at Diana, but did not interrupt her work. It seemed to make no difference whether or not she looked at her stenographic notes. The "histories" must have been somewhere imprisoned in the rat-trap that topped her head.

John Howard, too, stared at Diana—but with a difference. He was wondering if his patient might not be in love with her. Here was indeed another type of woman from Rosa Kreppel, and no man could be enslaved by the one if he cared in the least for the attractions of the other.

"No stimulant, thank you. A glass of water," Doctor Savidge said feebly. "This faintness will soon pass. Where is my niece? Surely, she came in with me!"

"Right here, uncle Will. Close beside you."

"A-hh, thanks, Diana. Will you wait, my dear—anywhere? As nearby as possible, of course. Doctor Howard will, perhaps, arrange that it may be in the corridor outside George's door, for you to be within call when I shall want you. Doctor Con-

nelly and I wish to see George at first by ourselves—with you and Doctor Howard, later.”

“That’s easily arranged, professor,” Howard said, reverentially taking the old gentleman’s hand. “If Miss Vaughan will allow me, I shall stay with her till you call us.”

“Miss Vaughan allows it.”

Diana spoke with formality. She did not like too evident admiration, and, good fellow though he was, Howard missed being a gentleman. “It’s because one takes him at his own over-valuation,” Diana thought regretfully. “In a crowd, where he’d lose individuality, he could pass muster and not be found out; but in a little town like North Harrow, and a little world like a hospital, there is nowhere for a surgeon to hide. If he’s the head of a country-town institution, a man is forever in his homemade limelight.”

“My uncle feels stronger, Doctor Howard,” she said. “Will you and Doctor Connelly take us to Mr. George Savidge, please, and I will wait with you in the corridor.”

The typewriting girl’s stare was becoming intolerable.

“Certainly!” Howard said, leading the way. The two elderly physicians, with Diana and himself, stepped into the elevator reserved for the use of distinguished visitors and yet more helpless patients, and were taken up to Emil Kreppel’s, or George Savidge’s, room.



## CHAPTER XV:

### DOCTOR HOWARD PHILOSOPHIZES.

At the end of the long corridor was a window and at the window were two chairs on which, usually, two nurses sat gossiping. Howard banished the nurses and offered one chair to Diana; the other he took for himself. Along the corridor the third door from the end led to the patient's room where Doctor Savidge and Doctor Connelly were in mysterious consultation. Diana was growing tired of mystery.

"Do you think they'll be a great while?" she asked Howard. "My uncle isn't well and he's terribly upset. If George is really here and able to be moved, why shouldn't we take him away at once?"

Howard thrust his hands to the bottom of his trousers' pockets. Balancing his chair backward against the window-sill, he crossed one outstretched foot over the other and puckered his lips as if to whistle, in the effort to appear at ease.

"Miss Vaughan," he began with hesitation, "there's a—er—well, you know, a complication. Your cousin has proved his identity satisfactorily to me, and after I spoke with Professor Savidge over the 'phone I hadn't a doubt that the supposed

Emil Kreppel is the professor's son; but do—er—you know there is a Mrs. Kreppel, daughter of a restaurant-keeper here in town, who claims your cousin for her husband?"

"I read your letter, Doctor Howard; uncle asked me to," Diana said gravely. "Tell me, please, all that you can about the woman. Does she believe really that she is George's wife? Do you know, I—I'm"—girlishly she blurted out the words—"I'm actually sorry for her, doctor!"

"Sorry!!"

The inadequacy of the term made Howard smile. He studied his pretty neighbor. Diana wore homespun, tailored in the latest fashion that fitted her slim body to perfection. The gown was of deep violet, to match her eyes and the bunch of flowers worn at her belt. Coat-collar and cuffs were of rich lace. Her broad-brimmed hat had two superb violet-colored ostrich plumes, of picturesque inordinate length. Her hair matched Rosinante's coat in color, but was glossier, thick and wavy. Howard did not, of course, know Rosinante, and could not picture the flower-like Diana on that ungainly beast's back where she looked far less like a fashion plate. To his eyes Miss Vaughan seemed the heroine of a novel or a modern society play, and contact with the vulgarities of ordinary living must be intolerable to her.

"It's a curious story," said he, hesitating as to whether or not he should repeat it to this entirely modish young woman. "You see, you're different, leading 'the sheltered life,' hedged in by the 'four hundred' so completely that you can't be expected to stand on tiptoe and peer over the hedge only to

see what the rough-and-ready big dirty world is doing."

"I know from books. There was a time"—Diana nodded, smiling wisely—"when it was impossible to know life from books. But those were the old romantic times and books—Shaw, Ibsen, Sudermann—show us Life. I've met Shaw and Kipling, too, at a dinner one time in London."

"I've met birth and death, sin, crime, suffering, happiness and sorrow right here in this hospital, as a house surgeon must," the young doctor said bluntly. "Naturally, our worlds are different, and so are our points of view, Miss Vaughan. However one looks at it, it is, I suppose, the same old world."

"What is your curious story?" Diana asked with the directness characteristic of her, amiably overlooking the argumentative opportunities opened up by his digressions.

"Your cousin's case. It's unprecedented in my experience. Doctor Connelly, and more particularly Doctor Savidge, may understand it—I don't! The human side I can present, but you won't find it in books—I haven't."

Diana ignored the thrust. "Do!"

"What?"

"Present it," she urged.

She had the sensation of being at a play. Because new to her, the stage setting of the hospital corridor seemed unreal. George, whom she had not seen, she was asked to believe was in a nearby room. Young Howard, trying evidently to impress her with his importance, the occasionally passing nurse or hospital orderly who stared at her—all were unreal;

poor actors not half so true-seeming as the cultivated few whom she knew that were taking the shock-proof world of letters by storm.

"It can't be so horrible as the things I've seen played and have read," said she, thinking of recent dramatists.

"I didn't say 'horrible.' I said: 'human.' The words aren't as yet synonymous. But to go on with my story:

"A refined, somewhat unusual looking young man appeared at Klein's restaurant on the day after Mr. George Savidge disappeared from his home in Schofield Falls. The young man seemed to have walked a long distance and was exhausted, while ravenously hungry. On his applying for work at Klein's, the Kleins engaged him as a waiter. The remarkable fact is that he couldn't speak English. He claimed that he knew only German—a queer jargon which, they tell me, wasn't illiterate but childish. Looking like a gentleman, he talked and behaved like a small boy whose education was either neglected or hadn't been properly begun. Why that was, Doctor Connelly and Doctor Savidge may be able scientifically to explain. I give you only the human side that a well-read woman of your world ought to be human enough to sympathize with—even if, in her experience, she hasn't come across it."

Diana's lip curled.

"I am listening, Doctor Howard. Do, please, go on!"

"Rosa Klein, the restaurant-keeper's daughter, is a beautiful woman, Miss Vaughan. She is vulgar, of course, with no pretensions at being a lady. The vulgarity may be a little more pronounced than that

of others of her class, but she is infinitely more attractive than most others."

"Has vulgarity attractions? For some men it may have. I'm sure it has not for George!"

Howard was imperturbable.

"It had for Emil Kreppel, Miss Vaughan."

As though stung, Diana sprang from her seat and stood panting. Her hand clutched the chair-back.

"You don't mean to say he was truly married to her—that he lived with her? According to her claim, she—he—they are legally married?"

"Not if he wasn't in his right mind as Emil Kreppel and is of sound mind as George Savidge. I believe, however, that if it turns out that he is not Mr. Savidge, but is mentally unsound he can not legally have married."

"But he is George Savidge."

"How do you know?"

"If he weren't, my uncle would have left the room before now," said Diana.

"I bow to the superior wit of woman."

"You needn't talk nonsense! What about the woman, Rosa Klein or Kreppel—that woman? What has become of her?"

"She calls at the hospital regularly, but I don't let her in. No power on earth can induce her to believe that there is no such person as Emil Kreppel, or that the man whom she thinks is her lawful husband is George Savidge and she has no claim on him."

"How can you say she has no claim! Poor thing!" Diana's eyes were swimming in tears. "He lived with her. You don't deny it?"

"He does."

Miss Vaughan shivered as if cold. She looked askance at the closed door. Her uncle had not yet called her to see George.

"Denies it? How can he, doctor? It is true, you say?"

"Gospel truth."

Howard's voice was earnest. He dropped all mannerisms.

"That's why I'm telling you the story before you're called in to see Mr. Savidge. He will deny it to you because, so far as he can, he tells the truth. All this happened while he called himself 'Emil Kreppel' and spoke no word of English, you must remember, and that time is wiped from his mind. As George Savidge, he says that he can not speak German and he seemed not to understand what Mrs. Kreppel was saying when she spoke in German to him. He knew German only as a child."

"Only as a little boy—under eight. They were abroad in Germany," Diana said, trying to recall the past. "I remember that George never took it up again. Though he is splendidly educated he doesn't care for languages as I do, and reads everything in translation. He's an omniverous reader."

"How about the name 'Kreppel'?"

"His mother's maiden name. Aunt Emma is of German descent, but American born, so German isn't her language.

She was impatient of Howard's questioning.

"Why catechize me, doctor? You know his life here. Then, tell me how George got into a hospital? Was he ill?"

"In a drunken brawl at the restaurant he fell and

struck his head. I told Doctor Savidge the circumstances by letter."

Diana blushed.

"I remember, now, that you did. But George wouldn't be mixed up in a drunken brawl. He hates low company, and has no temptation to drink. I sha'n't believe that your Kreppel is George till I've seen him."

"Doctor Savidge has not left his son's room," Howard said with meaning. "If he had not found his son, would he still be there?"

"But the woman, the woman!"

Impatiently Diana walked the floor, and Howard watched her, admiring the graceful, undulating sway of her body from shoulder to hip and from hip to arched instep, as she moved.

"Something, doctor, must be done about the woman. We can't leave her in agony, and spirit George away. It's enough to kill her."

"I'm so glad to hear you say that!" Howard cried impulsively. "I don't know what to do with her and was hoping you'd help."

"I want to help—of course. But what can I do? I've never heard of a situation more unreal."

"As you haven't experience of life but have of books, you may hit on something. It is 'unreal'—unnatural is the better word—so I'm helpless."

Has any one tried putting the case to her? Going into details, I mean, letting her know exactly who George Savidge is?" Miss Vaughan asked hopefully.

"I have seen Mrs. Kreppel once since the patient woke from his critical sleep, Miss Vaughan. Argument, then, would have had no weight with her."

"You mean, it wouldn't do any good? You're right. But she may listen to me, a woman, when she wouldn't to you."

The door to George Savidge's room opened.

"Don't breathe a word of this to uncle Will," Diana whispered hurriedly. You won't, please, doctor!"

"Not a word."

"Oh, thank you! I shall see the poor woman and talk with her. Trust me for it."

"As the two distinguished old gentlemen approached them, she turned in greeting.

"Well, uncle Will?" she asked.

Doctor Savidge was a changed man. His tremulousness was gone; he stood erect; his manner was firm; his eye serene.

"Well, child! George, of course, wants you. He asked for you instantly. Will you go in?"

He turned to the young surgeon.

"The best thing for the boy, Howard, is to take him home. He's in fine shape, but his mother is breaking her heart for him. How soon can we get him away from here?"

"As soon as you like. Under the circumstances, I should say that the sooner the better. He oughtn't to see—er——"

An eye-flash from Diana checked the name on Howard's lips. "The sooner the better, Professor Savidge," he reiterated lamely."

"You agree with us, Connelly?"

"Uncle," Diana said, "may go to Doctor Connelly's. Won't you, uncle? It's down the next street, Doctor Connelly tells me, and I shall join you there; but I must spend a few minutes alone with



George, and then allow him time to dress. He's weak still—unless he has been out of bed? I understand that he hasn't even been sitting up in a chair. But to get him into a motor-car is nothing, and we'll hustle him into bed after he's safe at home."

"You mustn't be long. Think of your aunt, Diana, and of Charlotte," said Dr. Savidge mildly. "They don't know we've found George."

"I'm thinking very much of auntie and of George, too. I'll go and prepare his mind to leave North Harrow, Doctor Howard."

"You won't find it difficult," Howard said dryly. "He's only too ready. But you are going all three in so great a hurry, how about——?"

Miss Vaughan held up a warning finger.

"Sh-ssh! Leave everything and everybody absolutely to me. I give you my word that there'll be no trouble."

Doctor Savidge was serener than before.

"If Di gives her word, Howard, you needn't worry," he said. "Whatever it is the child wants, let her have it. She'll wheedle it from you somehow, so that to let her have it in the first place is quickest. I speak from experience."

Diana smiled.

"Complacent ignorant vanity of the reading-woman!" groaned Howard under his breath. "What, the devil, has she learned from books? Expurgated them to fit into her original scheme of the universe, most likely! That chit of a girl to talk to Rosa Kreppel? One comfort is that she can't find the time!"

The two old physicians were ready to step into the elevator and be carried downstairs. Diana

moved undulantly as far as George's door. With her hand on the knob, she turned to toss the young doctor another smile.

"Come after me in a quarter of an hour," she said, "and I'll tell you what I mean to do. I'll know by then."

She went into the room and closed the door behind her.

"She isn't very much in love with him," thought Howard, "and she doesn't suspect all that marriage means to the German element here in North Harrow and to a woman of Rosa Kreppel's temper. Those two, I think, had better be kept apart. When I come up again I'll advise Miss Vaughan."

Howard saw Doctor Savidge and Doctor Connelly to the door of the latter's house and returned to the hospital. But he was not free to meet Miss Vaughan as he had intended. A case in the wards demanded immediate care. He worked for hours over the dying woman and failed to save her. When the poor creature gave her last gasp and passed away he remembered, on the sudden, George Savidge or Emil Kreppel, Rosa Kreppel and Diana Vaughan. Where were his colleagues—the distinguished Professor William Schofield Savidge and John Connelly? On inquiry, he learned that the doctors would not have him called away from his patient in her extremity, that Doctor Connelly had arranged for young Savidge to be taken quietly from the hospital, and that Miss Vaughan had gone to North Harrow House, the "hotel," where she would remain alone over the next day, till she had adjusted "some business," she said. She would be pleased to have Doctor Howard call on her when he could find the

time. Howard went to call. Miss Vaughan was out, the clerk knew not where, so he left his card with a note begging her to do nothing and to see nobody till she saw him and to call him on the 'phone as soon as she came in. Miss Vaughan did not call him. Howard waited for news of her in vain.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### HER MISSION.

Diana was alive to the fact that she had a mission. When she entered George's room her face was pale and her eyes were unusually hard and bright, but her manner was as gently non-committal as manners are, theoretically, supposed to be in treating the sick.

"That you, Di?"

Savidge's voice trembled. He did not know how his capricious lady would take him. To his relief, she seemed disposed to take him without question.

"George, dear, we've been so worried, you can't think!" she said. "Are you ready to go? The car is waiting."

"Ready? I should say so! But, Di—er—one moment! Sure that we're alone, Di? Nobody can overhear?"

"They've gone downstairs. That bumptious Doctor Howard—I can't bear the man!—has 'escorted' Doctor Connelly and uncle Will. He'll be back again for you and me. Uncle Will is to stay at Doctor Connelly's till we're leaving."

"Aren't you going to sit down, Di? There're things I'd like to speak about."

He looked keenly at her.

"See here! You're to speak to me," he said, "as to a human being—not a 'case.'"

Miss Vaughan took the chair beside his bed.

"I wouldn't have broached the subject; but if you bring it up, George, I suppose it's right to say what I think?"

Dropping her superficial self she said, then, what women of her stamp have from time immemorial repeated to their men-folk:

"Oh, George, how could you!"

Savidge was roused.

"I haven't done a blessed thing I shouldn't—if you mean that?" he declared, "and I'm ready to tell the truth. Dad and old man Connelly look on me as a 'case,' so I wouldn't talk out to them; wouldn't be tabulated, labeled, put under glass for a specimen! You may, or may not, believe me. I thought I'd get sympathy at least from you, Di!"

She did not answer.

"Have they told you about the woman?"

"Yes."

"She's on my conscience. Diana, I've been for days asleep. I used sometimes to walk in my sleep. I spoke German, dad said; the baby-talk I knew when a child. It's horribly uncanny. If the thing happened to you, how should you feel? Do you suppose I'd give those doctors the satisfaction of knowing from me what I can't understand about myself? But I'll tell it all to you.

Diana leaned forward.

"What?"

"I don't know how I came to North Harrow—it's North Harrow, isn't it?—how long I've been in the town or at the hospital."

He raised himself on his elbow, asking:

"When did I disappear, Di?"

"Nine weeks ago."

"And in that time could I have been dreaming—not alone sleep-walking, but actually hobnobbing with the people! Eating, drinking, brawling—the blow on the head that brought me to the hospital and at last to consciousness, they say occurred in a drunken brawl—could I have been doing that for nine weeks, married to a restaurant-keeper's daughter? It's impossible, Di—preposterous!"

Miss Vaughan's gentle manner of treating the sick returned.

"What does uncle Will say?" she inquired cautiously.

"Dad? Poor old dad!"

It was Savidge's turn to have his eyes brim over with tears.

"At first, Di, he was too scientifically happy to think; fatherhood got the better then of professional training and he broke down. It was for only a moment. His whole object is to get me home. Oh, Diana, thank God on your bended knees that you're not a 'case!' "

"Poor George!" Diana's voice shook with pity. "It must be too awful for you! What I've come to say, however, is that, as you may imagine, aunt Emma and Charlotte are worried nearly to death, and if it weren't for Mrs. Kreppel we'd rush you home and not think of North Harrow nor of an abominable creature in it ever again. Mrs. Kreppel has to be reckoned with, George. When the situation is put properly before her there'll be no more trouble."

"Who's to do it?"

"I."

Savidge stared.

"How? Di, you can't! Besides, there isn't time."

Miss Vaughan nodded determination.

"Yes, there is—plenty! My plan is quite simple. Uncle and you are to take the car and steal away. I'll coax uncle to let me stay at the hotel for twenty-four hours longer. Woman to woman I'll meet her—which is clearly my duty. No one else can explain the situation as I will. I feel intense sympathy for her."

George shuddered.

"If only you could see her face, Di!"

"Is she so very beautiful?"

"I don't know. It wasn't that. She may be, or may not; I didn't notice. She's tragic."

Diana pushed aside her chair and began rapidly to pace the floor.

"She loves you. What am I to do? If it turns out that money isn't what she wants, how awful! What can one do or say to her without the aid of money?"

"I don't know, Di, I'm sure! Better give it up and come with us."

Diana sat down.

"You don't know what you're saying! I'll call the nurse, George, and get you dressed."

She looked round the room.

"No packing to be done, is there? Uncle brought things for you in his suit-case in the corner over there, and a fur coat is in the car outside. Don't worry about our getting you off. But I sha'n't go. Whatever happens, I must stay."

"Has dad said you might?"

Savidge was uneasy.

"The woman may be crazy. I wish you wouldn't be sentimentally foolhardy, Diana!"

"I'm not sentimentally foolhardy. It's an act of common humanity. Doctor Howard has told me her story."

George sat up in bed.

"Has he? Di, that's an angel, tell it to me! I feel such a fool, you can't think! To tell all that I don't know would take hours—and then you mightn't believe me! To sum up: I don't know a thing—not a solitary thing that has taken place since last I set eyes on you. If you weren't an 'original' I shouldn't dare tell so much as that; for if you shrink from me now that I've told, I'll go all to pieces. Humor me as a dreamer who is at last suddenly awake—a soul that has found itself. Am I married, Diana, or am I not?"

"Not legally."

"Thank God!"

"You went through some sort of marriage ceremony with Rosa Klein, the restaurant-keeper's daughter."

"How did I get to the restaurant? Where is it?"

"In town here—somewhere. Uncle and I passed it on our way to the hospital. It's a respectable resort, an eating-house for Germans—the factory hands and others. There's a big German population in North Harrow."

"And I wandered in?"

"You appeared there on the day after you left home and must have walked all the way from Schofield Falls, probably passing the night in the woods. It is said that you were tired out and hungry, and applied to the Kleins for work as a waiter, because



you spoke only German and had trouble, anyhow, in making yourself understood. You spoke childish German."

Savidge was absorbed in interest.

"Yes, yes! Di, dear, go on!"

"I oughtn't, perhaps, to tell you," Diana said, hesitating. "Are you sure it isn't doing you harm?"

"It does me far more harm to lie here brooding, not knowing. No one else will tell, because, like Doctor Howard, Doctor Connelly and dad, they're scientifically afraid to talk, or, like the nurses, they think me a lying wretch and impostor. Fire ahead, Di! Let me know the worst—unless 'the worst is yet to come.'"

"I sha'n't let anything worse come, George. Trust me!" Diana said, tenderly compassionate.

"All right! Thanks, Di, dear! Do go on!"

"Let's see! You've been gone for nine weeks. You must have married the woman very quickly, and lived with her for between three and four weeks. I can't imagine why uncle didn't find you. North Harrow was the first place he thought of, and his detectives reported that there was no one to answer to your description. She fooled them, somehow, turned them off. The terrible fact remains that she still believes you are Emil Kreppel, her husband. Doctor Howard has seen her only once since the change. He couldn't, then, convince her that you don't belong to her. She is ignorant, and so can't get it through her head. To me, the best plan is to take you away at once, not letting her know where, and then I shall hang around town and question the people about you and her, and see what I can do to help her. People wouldn't be so cruel as to think

badly of her for entering in good faith on what she had every reason to suppose was a legal marriage. Very likely, she doesn't understand that. I'll go at it systematically," Diana said, "first seeing her friends and associates in North Harrow—people who've known her all her life; then her father—I forgot to ask whether or not she has a mother living—then the poor girl herself. When I've accomplished my mission I'll go back home."

"It's too much to ask of you, I—Diana, you're an angel!"

Diana looked at her watch.

"Doctor Howard was to be back in half an hour. It's later than that now. Suppose I call a nurse to get you up, George?"

"If only, only you would!!"

"I will."

The nurse came and, afterward, Doctor John Connelly, who explained that young Howard was with a dying woman in the wards. Savidge was ordered to be dressed and taken to the motor-car. Diana chose the right moment to attack her uncle. While they waited for George to be brought down, she took the old gentleman aside.

"You won't mind my stopping at North Harrow House for a day or two, uncle Will?"

"Stop at North Harrow House? For what?" he asked, amazed. Aren't you coming with us, Diana?"

"It's perfectly respectable," Miss Vaughan pleaded, "only a quiet little country-town hotel near home. I want to learn everything I can about that poor woman, to do something for her, to make things clear and help her see the truth."

The old doctor's face was stern.

"She deceived the searchers and hid my son from me. I can not forgive that woman. You've sprung this thing on me at the last moment, child."

"The whole thing, uncle Will, of finding George and making ready to take him home has had to be done in a few moments."

"So it has, Di; so it has!"

He let his arms fall to his sides, helplessly.

"Can't Howard attend to the woman? Our first interest is George, you know—it's a serious case."

"Yes, uncle Will, I know. Poor George! But so is Mrs. Kreppel's a serious case. A word or two from me, as a member of George's family, will work wonders and may prevent a scandal."

"True, dear! You have a head on your shoulders."

The old physician stood thinking.

"Connelly is here to help you. Howard is here. You'll be quite safe, of course, and you'll 'phone when you want the car sent over?"

"Yes, dear uncle."

Dr. Savidge looked at her fondly.

"You're trying to spare your aunt and Charlotte and me, Diana. I know your generous scheming! Far be it from me to interfere with anything wise and good my little girl sees fit to do! Still, I hate leaving you alone in a strange place, Diana. I ought to stay."

"You can't leave George."

"No. I'm torn between him and you. If I send you home with him, what shall I say to the woman?"

In her earnestness Diana held him by the lapel of his coat.

"Uncle Will, she wouldn't listen! George, she

thinks, is Emil Kreppel, whom you're stealing away. I can speak to her with sympathy and put the facts before her. The poor thing imagines that her good name is involved, so she might do anything."

"She is dangerous, then."

"She is heartbroken," said Diana.

"Aren't you afraid?"

"Not the least little bit in the world! I understand her."

"Are you coming, dad?"

"Yes, my boy. Ready? Got the fur coat on?"

"All ready and as fit as a fiddle."

Doctor Savidge put his foot on the car-step and turned to the silent, but benign, Doctor Connelly.

"John," he said, "this little girl intends staying at North Harrow House for a day or two. Will you keep an eye on her?"

"She might go to my house as well as not," the old bachelor answered, trying not to show reluctance. "I've an excellent housekeeper and I'll gladly put up at the hotel."

"I won't hear of it, Doctor Connelly," Diana said in haste. "You're very kind, but my object in staying is to be quite inconspicuous and to mingle with the people. Look after me all that you will, but don't let a soul know you're uncle's friend or take any particular interest in what I do. I'll go to the hotel like an ordinary stranger."

Doctor Connelly more broadly smiled. Already a crowd was gathered in front of the hospital to watch the motor-car, the pretty girl in fine clothes who thought herself inconspicuous, and the mysterious invalid. By a miracle Rosa was not there.

"You'd best start, uncle."

"I think so. Good-by, Diana. 'Phone me to-night, or, if you don't wish to do it from the hotel, Connelly will send the message by his private wire. You'll look after her, John, I know. Good-by, and God bless you!"

They were gone. Stanton put on speed and left the crowd of children and loafers hooting after him. Diana took advantage of the confusion to walk with Doctor Connelly to the hotel, where in due form she registered and was allotted a room on the second floor. Its one window looked on the back of the house, insuring her greater privacy.

"I shall do nothing more to-day. I'm dead tired. Mayn't I have supper on a tray in my room?"

"I'll see that it's sent to you, Miss Vaughan."

"Thank you, Doctor Connelly. By the by, can't it be managed, too, that I needn't see Doctor Howard, if he should call this evening? Foolishly, I left word for him to come to see me as soon as ever he could. Would it be more than a teeny-weeny white lie to leave another word at the desk to say I'm out, or don't they tell white lies in North Harrow?"

"North Harrow has the bad habits of other towns. I'll see Howard somehow or another and make it right with him. You needn't be disturbed before to-morrow, Miss Vaughan. I'm sure you want rest."

Diana faintly smiled.

"I do. Good night, and thank you again very much, Doctor Connelly! I'll have a nap; then supper; then 'phone you at your house for news as soon as uncle has had time to get George home. They'll do that run of eighteen miles as fast as they dare."

Doctor Connelly bowed and left her. Diana went at once to her room to prepare for the night.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF GLADYS MARIE.

The first thing that Miss Vaughan did was to remove her hat with the heavy plumes, which was making her head ache.

She hung it on a nail that protruded from the frame of the mirror above the bureau. Because the room was small, with only a back window, it was, as a rule, not given to ladies, but to "drummers" and other traveling men. The nail by the mirror was for shaving paper. A few forgotten scraps rustled dismally under Diana's elaborately simple hat. The bureau-top was stained and the varnish gone from many places. Diana ran shuddering to the wash-stand for a towel, which she folded into a neat cover to hide the stains; then she tricked out the white surface with silver-topped toilet articles from her bag. She took off the tailored gown—regarded also as severely simple—and hung her satin-lined coat over a chair. There were two chairs; a Flemish oak rocker and a side-chair slightly wobbly. The wobbly chair was cane-seated. Some traveler must have put his boot-heel through it, yet so cleverly had he fitted the seat together that you could not tell where it was gone, unless, as Diana did, you tested it by hand. The bed, in a corner, was of white iron,

single and clean. An oval table stood before the window. Diana drew the table out into the room to receive her supper. When the chambermaid-waitress brought the tray, Miss Vaughan was a pretty picture of expectancy on the rocker, rocking as she faced the door. Her hairpins and combs were scattered over the bureau, and her hair in two burnished-bronze braids hung on her shoulders. Her dress skirt swung from a hook not entirely hidden by the too-scant brown calico curtain across a corner opposite her. She was wearing a pale gold-colored dressing-gown of Chinese silk, hand-embroidered with irises and lilies, above which her violet eyes gleamed bewitchingly.

"My!" the girl with the supper-tray exclaimed, "but ain't you elegant!"

Diana laughed. "She doesn't mean to be impatient," she thought. "I'm here on a mission among North Harrow people to learn things and I must be one of the people."

"Do you like it?" she said. "It's a comfortable old dud, nice for traveling. I'm glad you think it pretty."

"Good land, ma'am!" cried the girl. "Do yer wear it travellin'?"

"Not on railway trains, but in hotels or at houses where I stay over night," Diana explained courteously.

"I see!" said the girl. "It's jest one of yer plain, or'nery nigh'gowns. I've heerd tell as how New York ladies wears them fine things fer sleepin'. It's awful pretty."

Mortified at her blunder she blushed in setting down the tray. The tea was slopped from the cup

into the saucer. Deftly she subtracted the saucer, and poured its contents back into the cup without spilling a drop. It was done to show Miss Vaughan how good a waitress she was. Diana observed her with interest.

"Thanks! You needn't mind. I won't take tea, I think; it looks rather too strong. What else have you there?"

"Calf's liver, biled pertater, an' currant cake. Mis' Cockrane, she makes all the cakes an' pies. Too bad you wa'n't here fer dinner! We had cranberry pie."

Diana munched a square of bread. It was doughy and flavorless, but was all that she could manage to swallow.

"Is Mrs. Cockrane the proprietor's wife?"

"Yes ma'am, she is. She's reel good, Mis' Cockrane is, an' she makes elegant ice-cream Wednesdays an' Sundays."

"What is your name?"

"Gladys Marie Doane. My sakes, what a swell hat! Ain't them long blue feathers great, though!"

Gladys Marie lurched headlong in the direction of the bureau, hand outstretched, so that Diana became panic-stricken for fear that she might try on the hat.

"Don't touch it—please! It's—er—delicate. How old are you, Gladys Marie? You ought to be playing with dolls."

"Dolls? Huh! Guess not! I'm goin' on eighteen."

Obediently, however, she left the hat and went to stand as close to Miss Vaughan as she could get. A stocky little creature, snub-nosed, with squirrel-bright eyes in a round face, she had the expression



of a very young inquisitive child. Diana could see that she was older than she looked on coming into the room. Her person was not neat. The hands bore the traces of every sort of domestic work, except scrubbing, and her unkempt head made Miss Vaughan then and there resolve to wear her hat on her own head, or else to keep it constantly in sight while in North Harrow. Hotel chambermaids, she remembered, have pass-keys to the rooms, and unless one's door is locked on the inside and the key in the lock they can enter.

"You make me nervous, standing so close," she said. "Sit down, Gladys Marie. I'd rather talk than eat. I'm not hungry. Should you like some of my supper?"

"Thank yer, ma'am! Ain't yer goin' ter eat it all—ree'ly?"

With that perfunctory protest, Gladys Marie sat down to dispose of the meal, so entirely free from false shame and with so great an appetite that Diana attributed her easy behavior to habit.

"Ladies here over night," she said indifferently, "often, I suppose, have meals on a tray in their rooms not to attract attention by going into the hotel dining-room?"

Gladys Marie's mouth was full of potato. She swallowed hastily before she could answer:

"No ma'am, they don't! Folks is awful currus about meals carried upstairs. That's why I slopped the tea. The hull bunch was crowdin' roun' the office desk, askin' was yer too good ter eat wid 'em, an' what was I takin' up ter yer so special."

"Am I detaining you?" Diana inquired. "They need you, perhaps, to wait in the dining-room?"

"No, ma'am, they don't. The tables is set, an' they does their own stretchin'."

Diana felt uncomfortable. Among her kind in a fashionable crowd she might pass unnoticed; but in this crude American town she could not be an inconspicuous figure, and now she understood why Doctor Connelly smiled at her intention to mix with the people and remain unknown.

"They've guessed, then, who and what I am," she said in humorous despair, lightened by the leaven of conceit. "It can't, of course, be helped. I ought to have worn motoring goggles and a thick veil. I wonder what their theory is about George? Can you tell me, Gladys Marie?"

Gladys Marie paused, open-mouthed, a piece of calf's liver on her fork, while she puzzled out the question.

"George?" she said slowly. "No, ma'am; I ain't acquainted with no George that you'd be likely ter know. There's a George as works up ter the shoe factory, an' one at O'Connor's livery. Mr. Snow's, the butcher's youngest, is named George, an——"

"That will do! The North Harrow people don't know me; do they?"

Gladys Marie grinned.

"Yes, ma'am! They was on ter you, all right! You're the lady ventriloquist what gave a show here las' spring an' I had the mumps an' missed it."

Diana clapped her hands.

"That does excellently! Tell them, Gladys Marie, they're a wonderful people at guessing. But I must learn more about you and the rest of the inhabitants—the Kleins, for example. Did Rosa Klein marry?"

"Biggest weddin' ever! Ain't yer heerd tell 'bout that?"

"Gladys Marie," Diana said impressively, "take away the tray. Leave it in the hall outside the door, and come back instantly. I can't let you go till you've told everything you can about the Klein family and the wedding.

"There ain't no fam'ly—only Rosa an' her father."

Gladys Marie obeyed in putting the tray outside. Now she drew the wobbly chair again to the table, and sat with soiled bare elbows resting on the wood, and with her chin propped on her knuckles. The lady ventriloquist's friendly attitude charmed her.

"They're Germans, them Kleins," she said. "Rosa's a girl as used ter have all the men jest crazy stuck on her, but wouldn't look at 'em. She's a good cook, too. If it wa'n't fer her, they wouldn't be doin' business at Klein's restaurant, like they does, wid men droppin' in at all hours ter eat an' drink—Germans an' not Germans. Say! There is an awful lot of Germans in North Harrar, because the factory brings 'em. My sister, she made a good match wid Gustav Schiel, a German, who's the undertaker an' lives acrost the way from Klein's."

"Never mind your sister!" impatient Diana said. "Tell me about the Klein wedding."

"I was goin' ter say as how my sister could tell you best. Didn't she manage it fer 'em? You call an' see my sister ter-morrer, an' she'll tell yer most beautiful."

"I'll see everybody that I possibly can during to-morrow," Diana declared with great earnestness.

"Don't you know the man whom Rosa Klein married?"

"Who'd be acquainted wid the likes of him?" said Gladys Marie, with her nose in the air. "That's jest what I was goin' ter tell about when yer axed me. Rosa's father is rich, an' they does sech a business that she could 'a' had most anybody. Joe O'Connor is rich, an' he was wild fer her; but off she goes an' marries a sissy little feller what walks in from the street wid' not a penny in his pocket, fer all that he had on glad rags. No bag an' baggage showin' what he is an' where he comes from. No spunk ter up an' tell what crime he's done an' run away from. He wants work. No harm in that—if they dares ter take him wid not a line of reference 'bout how an' where he works before. They needs a waiter, so they takes the risk. Rosa Klein got her dander up, they tells me. It was her that made the old man sour on Hummel who'd waited at Klein's fer near on five year, but Rosa one day up an' bounces Hummel. Mebbe they needed a waiter pretty bad, but not sech a bad waiter as Kreppel."

Gladys Marie chuckled at her joke.

"Why, he couldn't," she went on, "serve nothin' in the right style. Rosa teaches him herself. My lands, but she showed patience! It wa'n't all patience, though; fer fust yer know didn't she up an' sass the old man till he was willin' fer peace ter have her marry Emil. Rosa Klein turnin' down Joe O'Connor—livery stable, eight pairs of hosses, an' carriages, an' all—ter take up wid Emil Kreppel from nowhere wid nothin'! There was talk enough; but she had her way, an' folks tuck sides wid the

old man widout sayin' so ter Rosa. Klein'll tell yer. Ax him. If Rosa ain't nowheres 'round ter hear, jest you ax him!"

Diana's breeding served her in good stead. Overcome by Gladys Marie's unexpected point of view she showed no emotion, but she sat rigid.

"Amazing!" she exclaimed when she could get her breath. "Rosa Klein, then, is supposed to have married beneath her? Do I understand that the livery-stable keeper is looked on as—er—socially superior to Emil Kreppel? But what do people say—now that they know?"

"Knows what?" Gladys Marie asked. "You knows somethin', doncher? You was only pumpin' me? I s'pose Joe O'Connor druv yer here in the stage an' told? But, land sakes, it ain't turned out none so fine! Kreppel ain't no reel prince in a fairy story."

"I don't know—not a thing. Tell more—that's a good girl!" Diana begged. "It's an entirely new story—a point of view I never dreamt of—and I must get the different points of view before I can act. Talk, Gladys Marie—talk! It's important."

Gladys Marie's eyes grew rounder.

"Act? Are yer goin' ter give us play-actin'? Say! It'll be great! Will yer do it on yer ventriloquizin' evenin' at the Town Hall? But yer couldn't do him in German the way that Kreppel used ter talk—not if yer worked at it fit ter bust, yer couldn't!"

Sorrowfully she shook her head.

"No, ma'am! In course, I knows," she added politely, "if any one was able a lady like you could, but it ain't possible."

Diana had herself well in hand.

"I shall do my best," she said. "Don't let's talk about acting and ventriloquism, child. You'll know who I am, Gladys Marie, when the time comes."

Her smile was peculiar—tender yet mischievous. She reserved it for the hearts she wished to draw to her, and it never failed in effect. It completely won Gladys Marie.

"I was only foolin'. Yes, ma'am, I'll tell. But they all knows it, and the hull town could tell as well as me, an' better, so that's why I thought yer knew all along."

Diana was beginning to find people queerer than the characters she met in books. Certainly, they were harder to cope with.

"And how did Kreppel turn out?" she asked, curious, while endeavoring to be patient. "Do you know—really—what has happened?"

"Sure! Everybody knows."

"Well? What?"

Gladys Marie tossed her head.

"He was hurt in a fight. Lots of foolin' goes on at Klein's, an' them as don't look alive gets hurt. Howsomedever, it wa'n't nobody's fault but his'n. They do say as how Rosa blames Joe O'Connor fer bein' fust an' foremost in startin' a row. Kreppel, he drinks too much, so he slips an' falls, an' cuts his head open. Off he goes in a nambulance to th'ospital. He was awful sick, an' ravin', an' didn't know nothin'. Rosa had a mind he was goin' ter die, an' she wouldn't leave him. All of a sudden, he gets so he knows her, an' they was as happy as two love-birds. Rosa goes ter bring him back home. The minnit she turns away her head, th'ospital doc-

tors an' nurses they gets ahold on Kreppel, finds out all his secrets, an' scares him so as he gives up his wife and fam'ly, swearin' black is white ter please folks as he is afraid will get him inter trouble. Lucky they're a-keepin' him safe inside th'ospital! Like as not he'd be tarred an' feathered, an' rode out of town on a rail, if only he dared show his coward face, after denyin' his lawful wedded wife, sayin' he won't live no more wid her! I tell you, ma'am, the men in this town what's respectable won't stan' fer no stigmat put on Rosa Kreppel! They was hoppin' mad when she married him—the hull bunch was. But now it's done an' over, Kreppel won't be allowed ter sneak out of it. Lands sakes! if he's a 'fugitive from justice' it ain't goin' ter help any fer him not ter remember his wife! An' speakin' English jest as good as you an' me the live-long time! That ain't no decent way ter skin outer yer troubles. It only makes 'em wuss."

Diana turned so very white that Gladys Marie was frightened.

"Do yer feel took sick, ma'am? Shall I get yer somethin'?"

"No; I'm only tired and—shocked by your story. You see, I don't know North Harrow and had no idea what people thought of Emil Kreppel. Wait, Gladys Marie! I must send Doctor Connelly a note and get his answer before I go to bed. By this time, very likely, he has a telephone message for me and will send it round by messenger. Will you see that I get it? Tell me, please, your sister's name and address. Mrs. Gustav Schiel? Thank you. And she lives—where? Opposite Klein's restaurant? I'll remember. I'll see her in the morning. The

livery-stable keeper, you say, is in love with Mrs. Kreppel? I'll see him, too. Would he talk, I wonder?"

"Talk?"

Gladys Marie gave her head another toss to express her general knowledge of the world and her particular acquaintance with North Harrow.

"Sure! Joe'll talk. He ain't got no secrets nor done nothin' ter be ashamed of! The store he sets by Rosa ain't no secret, neither, an' he'll talk of it fer jest as long as he'll get anybody ter listen."

Reluctantly Gladys Marie tore herself away. Her employers had sent twice in search of her, so she dared stay upstairs no longer. Besides, she could see that the lady was tired. It would not do to wear out her welcome. Such a flood of information she had not in her short life been encouraged to spout forth. Gladys Marie flattered herself that small news was left for any one else to tell the lady ventriloquist.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE SCHIEL FAMILY AT HOME.

Diana woke next morning utterly discouraged. It was, perhaps, but the natural reaction of her enthusiasm of the night before. She could not tell. Her surroundings were hideous and depressed her, she reasoned. No one temperamentally art-loving could be cheerful in such a room.

She dressed hurriedly and went down to breakfast; then out into the streets, where she hoped to breathe more freely. She had Mrs. Schiel's address in her pocket-book; but her bump of locality was to be trusted, and she felt no doubt of her ability to find the way. People stared at her. The violet hat with the plumes became a ridiculous weight on her head and Diana hated it. A subconsciousness of being always well gowned, because appropriately so on all occasions, had gone with her through life and given her "poise"; but now she would have offered almost any money for a white shirtwaist, a nondescript jacket and skirt, and a hat with blue and green cotton roses such as she saw on the women who stared at her. She wished she had on Kingsley's shoes. Her feet burned with walking, and she was miserable.

"Which of these women is Rosa Kreppel?" she asked herself as she journeyed. To Diana it was

a journey in a foreign land, and when a motherly woman passed scolding in German at a brood of children, it seemed quite natural to hear her do it in the tongue that she had brought over the water. The German woman, however, could not be the belle of North Harrow, whose townsmen commiserated her for marrying beneath her station. Diana longed, yet dreaded, to come upon the sign: "Klein's Restaurant." She imagined Rosa a buxom beauty, standing at the door with a smile—the type of barmaid that Miss Vaughan knew in literature. It was difficult to fit her with the tragic face of which George and Doctor Howard had spoken.

She turned a corner and came in full view of the restaurant; but as she saw it she stumbled, nearly falling over a little girl on roller skates.

"Mercy!" Diana said. "How you frightened me? Have I hurt you, child? I'm sorry."

At her tone the child began to howl, feeling hurt very badly indeed.

Diana took her into her arms.

"Hush! Don't scream so, you poor little thing! What shall I do? Stop crying and tell me where you live?"

The child pointed with a dirty forefinger.

"Dat mein house. Oh! Oh! Oh!"

It was the undertaker's. Hearing howls, Mr. and Mrs. Schiel and the other children ran to the youngest Schiel's rescue.

"I am so sorry!" Diana said. "As sorry as can be! Still, I don't believe she's much hurt. It isn't possible."

"Nein," Gustav Schiel said philosophically. "Es thut nichts. Mein chillern dey always gries like dat.

Dey haf goot lungs. Come in, Fräulein, und rest yourselfs. Gretchen, de lady vill haf a seat und rest herselfs."

Now that Diana had met Gladys Marie she would have recognized Gretchen, or Maggie Schiel, anywhere. The shrieking child was borne off by its brother and sister.

"Haf a seat, Fräulein, haf a seat," the little undertaker repeated, nervously rubbing his hands together, but again ready to philosophize and to joke. "Make yourselfs at home. Ve can not do peesness for you, I hopes; but, like odder blaces of peesness, ve say: 'Visitors always velcome und not obliged to puy!'"

The windows' display of caskets was carefully modest. One, white-draped, held a child's coffin; the other was in black, with a plain coffin marked at "a reasonable price" for an adult. On going into the "establishment" Miss Vaughan found the interior very like an ordinary country store. Pinking was "promptly done" behind a counter where a show-case displayed a variety of "notions" for mourners—jet ornaments, bonnet pins and hairpins, ruchings in black and in white, ribbons of different widths for wreath-bows, artificial flowers and other decorations. In long, narrow open boxes of lavender and of white, ranged alternately against the walls, were the crepe and ribbon streamers that appear on the outer doors of houses of mourning. Mrs. Schiel conducted a prosperous millinery business in ready-made suits, hats and veils. At the back of the store were camp-chairs for hire, and both dull-striped and gay-colored awnings. Since the tremendous success of Rosa's wedding, the house

of Schiel had taken on a jaunty air of readiness to throw off black at a moment's notice and replace it with wedding finery, as a marriageable young widow does her weeds.

"I am Miss Vaughan," Diana said, "staying at North Harrow House, where I've met your sister, Gladys Marie, Mrs. Schiel. If I hadn't frightened your little daughter by tumbling over her accidentally I should anyhow have called on your sister's introduction to ask about the trouble across the way, and to see what can be done for poor Mrs. Kreppel. Gladys Marie directed me here. She says that you know the Kleins and had something to do with the—er—wedding arrangements. Had you?"

Gustav Schiel threw out his chest. Though diminutive, he seemed instantly to swell with importance.

"Ach, ja! Ve knows der Kleins, und Rosa, und Rosa's husband Kreppel—nicht wahr, Gretchen?"

"Can you tell me something about Emil Kreppel?" Diana asked patiently.

"No good!" Mrs. Schiel snapped. "Rosa's a reel good girl, an' they say her heart is broke. She takes on awful bad. Gott in Himmel!"—Maggie Schiel had caught the exclamation from Gustav—"they'd oughter shut up Kreppel in th'ospital where they've got him safe, an' keep him there. Fer any feller sech as him, it or a prison is the rightful place."

"The town feeling is strong against poor Kreppel, then?"

"I dunno as what yer mean by any 'town feelins'," Mrs. Schiel said suspiciously. "Air yer a newspaper writer? Goin' ter get up an article on him fer the North Harrar Review?"

Diana was horrified.

"Mercy, no! I hope not a word of this will get into the papers! Is there a North Harrow Review? I'd forgotten. Worse and worse! I wish I'd gone back home with George and uncle Will!"

"Do yer, ma'am? In course," Mrs. Schiel said politely, "I dunno what George yer mean, an' what 'uncle Will.' Now I comes ter think, there is a George Snyder as works fer——"

"No, no! Don't tell me. I'm not inquiring about any 'George' for a newspaper. This is merely a friendly call, Mrs. Schiel. As I happen to be at North Harrow House and know your sister, naturally I've heard of Mrs. Kreppel's misfortune. Gladys Marie told the pathetic story, and said that you helped with the wedding."

"The finest effer seen, Fräulein," the little undertaker nervously interpolated. "Ach, ja! Fräulein Rosa vas a peautifool pride! My best team of vite horses drives her to de church und home again—de vite horses!" He dropped his voice to a confidential whisper: "You know, Fräulein, vite horses is moost peautifool for a veddings."

"Horrible! You don't mean," Diana asked with a shudder, "that she drove in one of your funeral coaches with white horses to a church to be married? I'm not in the least superstitious, but that——" She could not finish the sentence.

"Laws!" Maggie Schiel said, placidly rethreading her needle to go on basting the mourning garment she had on the cutting-board across her knees. "It ain't nothin'! Me and Gustav both is fond of Rosa, so we helped give her a fine weddin'—an' it were fine!"

Diana stopped her ears.

"I won't hear any more about the wedding. The subject hurts. Your place, you know, Mrs. Schiel—the—er—business, with its associations——"

"Gott in Himmel, ye soon gits used ter all that!" So diverted was Maggie Schiel that she giggled. "I didn't guess at fust what ailed ye, ma'am. In fac', ma'am, I've buried two of me own, an' I know. I was married wid a fine weddin' meself—an' I know that, tew. Mebbe, ma'am, ye ain't married?"

"I am not!" Miss Vaughan said with emphasis.

"Han' me them scissors over there, Gustav. I heerd Rosa Klein," Mrs. Schiel said indifferently, "talk like youse many and many a time. Not that pair, Gustav, yer bloomin' idjit! They're all wore out, an' I wisht ye'd throw 'em away; I'm allus gittin' 'em. The sharp pair on the windy-sill. As I was sayin', ma'am, whin a gal is married she gits used ter weddin's an' fun'rals in the fam'ly—more especially if it's her own husband's business, like it is Gustav's, makin' honest money in fair dealin's. Laws! Everybody's got ter have the undertaker sooner or later, so ye'll come ter it, ma'am. As far as we're consarned, it's a good stiddy business. But Rosa used ter talk jest like yesilf, an' whin her turn come ter git married she were the quickest at it that ever I did see. Wa'n't she, Gustav?"

"Dat cert'ly ist so!" the little undertaker said, rubbing his hands. Diana noticed then the disagreeable peculiarity of his crossed eyes, and thought that she had got all she wanted from the Schiels. She was not adept at extracting information from people who do not know how to give out what they have, and the study of unattractive human nature had no

charm for her. She longed to be on ground where she was more at ease.

"There is, I've been told, a Joe O'Connor who knows the Kleins and admires Mrs. Kreppel. Where is he?"

"Nex' street, 'roun' the corner, fust turn ter yer right."

"Have I offended you, Mrs. Schiel? I beg your pardon!"

"Gott in Himmel, no! I'm not that easy made mad!"

Mrs. Schiel smoothed her plumage to accompany the visitor amiably to the door.

"In course, I could tell all ye'd like ter know about O'Connor an' Rosa; but if ye wants ter ax it at headquarters, I'd be the las' one ter try ter stop ye. Wouldn't I, Gustav?"

"Goot day, Fräulein, goot day!"

The wretched little man was earnestly bowing her out. Diana saw that his conjugal respect would not let him wander into the paths of gossip with any strange young woman—even though she touched on the subject of Rosa Kreppel's wedding. Miss Vaughan headed for the livery stable. After interviewing Joe she could go to Rosa at the restaurant and, equipped on all points, end the miserable business. To Joe's private office she strolled gracefully and asked to see Mr. O'Connor. He was out. Diana would wait. It would be only fifteen minutes. When the ten-thirty local train should have steamed into North Harrow and away again, O'Connor would drive back from the railway station; and punctual to the minute in he came.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### O'CONNOR IS MADE TO HEAR REASON.

"Is this Mr. Joseph H. O'Connor?"

"It air, ma'am."

Diana saw a ruddy, heavy man—morose with grief. Before stating her errand she hesitated; then she decided on frankness.

"I am here on a serious matter, Mr. O'Connor, and want your help," she said. "I know who Emil Kreppel really is, and I must explain things to the woman who believes that she is his wife—I mean, Mrs. Rosa Kreppel. Will you talk to me? Tell me where and how I can speak on so painful a subject in person to Mrs. Kreppel?"

Joe's knees shook so that he sat down suddenly to mop his forehead with an enormous red-and-yellow-bordered handkerchief. The office was a small close room. Its rough desk was littered with papers, a telephone and accessories. There were two cane-seated round-backed chairs, and conspicuously placed between the chairs was a spittoon with a red and yellow border, which Diana could not help noticing, exactly matched the handkerchief. Joe smelt of the stable, but Miss Vaughan tried not to object. She must get used to contact with all sorts and conditions of men.

"Yer kin, yer know, ma'am, go to th'restaurant



an' ax ter spake in private wid Mrs. Kreppel," he said hoarsely. "But I dunno—I dunno; I'm afeard it 'ud break her heart."

He spread his great red hands, one on each knee, thumbs in, elbows turned out, as he leant forward lost in painful thinking. The handkerchief hanging limp under one hand was as wet as if it had been dipped in water.

"I knew old Klein well, an' his daughter, too, ma'am—as fine a woman, axin' yer pardon, as ever were seen in North Harrar an' ever will be. But I dunno what's come over me—I dunno."

He lifted heavy-lidded eyes with an expression that made Diana's own eyes redden with tears.

"I useter be mad wid rage at her fer marryin' sech a sucker an' kid, wid a rotten past he were hidin' ter be fergot; an' now whin I sees her unhappy, wid him stuck in th'ospital, I'd give me eye-teeth, I would, ter bring the kid back."

"Haven't you heard?" Diana asked.

"Oh, yes! I've heerd tell as how he's gone plumb out o' his durned head agin, an' swears he ain't married!" O'Connor said sneering.

He brought down his fist on the desk with a blow to make the telephone dance.

"Gawd A'mighty, I wisht he'd say it ter me, insultin' the woman I respec'! Wa'n't I the man in this town what felt the wust on the night I had ter stan' up and watch it doin'? Not married? Hully gee! I wisht hard enough he wa'n't, I hev'!"

Then he remembered the tremendous statement that the lady made on opening the conversation.

"Ain't he Emil Kreppel, sure enough? Do ye know reelly, ma'am, where he do come from?"

"I know," Diana said gravely, "that he was identified by my uncle and me at North Harrow hospital yesterday afternoon as Mr. George Savidge, who was lost for many weeks and wandered here, not knowing his own name nor where he came from. It's a long story. I sha'n't discuss it with any but the unfortunate woman who is entitled to know the truth as fully as I can put it to her. Mr. Savidge is not now in North Harrow. He has been taken home. His mother and sister have borne enough. They must be spared the news of his entanglement for which, after all, he is not to blame."

O'Connor stared.

"'Entanglement,' ma'am? Ye call marriage an 'entanglement'?"

"I don't know what else to call it," Diana exclaimed, at her wits' end. "No one shall ever breathe a word against the woman's good name, Mr. O'Connor. What I'm trying to make clear to you people is that Mr. Savidge is not to blame. He was ill and didn't know what happened."

"Air yer fixin' ter give that 'ere song an' dance ter Rosa?" Joe said slowly. "Axin' yer pardon, ma'am, kin yer belave Rosa'll put up wid it—that any honest woman would?"

"Won't she listen to reason? Mr. Savidge was not himself when he married her. He doesn't even remember having seen Rosa Klein in his life. He is a gentleman, Mr. O'Connor, the son of Dr. William Schofield Savidge, of whom you may have heard?—No? You haven't? It doesn't matter. All that he can do to compensate——"

Joe stopped her with a gesture full of dignity.

"It ain't no excuse, ma'am, sayin' he wa'n't himself whin he married, an' now he's well he don't remember his own wife's face. Marriage is in natur, ma'am. It's the fust time as ever I heerd tell of it as a disease what a man kin get well of an' find out he ain't been married at all! Axin' yer pardon, that 'ere excuse beats the divorces all holler. It won't go down in North Harrar, ma'am, it won't, an' it's lucky for Kreppel he were took away quick! If he wa'n't, he'd be took sick again purty durn suddent, ma'am, and larn he was married ter Rosa Klein all right!"

Diana stood.

"I am sorry! I can't," she said, "feel anything but sorrow; because I know how you people must care, and it's a dreadful misfortune to have happen to man or woman. I repeat, however, that Mr. Savidge is a gentleman and will do what he can for Rosa Klein."

"So Kreppel is a gentleman, is he? Rosa guessed right. She allus stuck ter it he were. How is it he don't speak no English, ma'am?"

"He does. He—he forgot his English, and really does not speak any German," Diana faltered. "*Really*, he does not."

At Joe's look she became confused and blushed.

"Ask the doctors; don't ask me! I can't explain it, Mr. O'Connor."

"No, ma'am, I'm afeerd yer can't. Let's see. He fergot the English langwidge an' got married; now he's fergot he's married an' he's fergot he spakes German. It's wonderful how easy he do fergit things, ma'am!"

Overwrought Diana burst into tears.

"Don't ye cry!" O'Connor said, rising awkwardly to stand, shifting from one foot to the other. In course, it ain't no fault o' yourn, I'm sure! What kin I do fer ye? What is it ye come, ma'am, ter talk ter me fer?"

Diana made a supreme effort for self-control. Drying her eyes, she steadied her voice to ask, as well as she was able, "Tell me about Rosa Klein. Is she very unhappy?"

"I ain't seen Rosa sence the one time she stopped here fer ter tell what she thought o' me. It were the day before she was goin' ter th'ospital ter take Emil home cured. She was all wore out, an' kinder excited," Joe said, generously, misstating Rosa's furious attempt to force a quarrel; "but I seen old man Klein sence. Klein, he says that Rosa come back all alone ter say Emil was gone plumb crazy an' didn't know her no more. She wanted ter bring him home anyways, but the doctor didn't want fer ter let her. Then, back she goes on a run ter th'ospital ter find the door slammed in her face, an' ter be told, up an' down, she ain't allowed ter see her own husband till the Doctor Savidge ye spoke about, ma'am, comes fer ter identify him. Rosa is what ye call 'high-sperrited.' D'ye wonder she takes it hard?"

Miss Vaughan, too, was high-spirited. She showed her mettle.

"I shall go to call at once on Mrs. Kreppel. The restaurant is only round the corner; I saw it from the undertaker's."

"Was Gustav Schiel chinnin' wid ye?" Joe asked with suspicion.

"I tried to obtain information from Mr. and

Mrs. Schiel," said Diana forlornly. "It was useless. Mrs. Schiel's sister is waitress and chambermaid at North Harrow House, where I'm stopping. She told me that Mrs. Schiel might help me to approach Mrs. Kreppel. I heard, then, of you, so I came here."

Joe's honest eyes clouded.

"Ye heerd, I guess, I'm dead gone on Rosa, an' I hev ben fer years," he said. "But it ain't cuttin' no ice. Now her sucker-husband's deserted her, I'd bring him back in a minnit—if I only knew where ter look fer him."

"I'm sure that you would!" Diana said warmly.

She sat down again.

"Please, Mr. O'Connor, listen to reason! Mr. Savidge is gone. He hasn't run away from North Harrow nor done anything contemptible. He has been taken home by his physician's orders under a physician's care. If he were enough informed to defend himself against these charges of dreadful wickedness he would. For only one moment put yourself into his place—please! He doesn't know that there are charges against him; doesn't know what he's accused of having done. All he knows is that he waked in a hospital to find himself called 'Emil Kreppel,' while a stranger claimed him for her husband, speaking a language he doesn't understand. He is as bewildered as you, and is far more distressed, because he's a——" She was going to say: "Because he's a gentleman," but stopped in time. "Because he is anxious to do right," she concluded lamely.

O'Connor's eyes flashed.

"Let him come back ag'in, then, an' prove who

an' what he is, an' do right, ma'am, by his lawful wife. They say in this town as how Rosa don't eat an' don't sleep no more fer longin' after him. They say in this town as how Rosa stands at th' 'ospital door an' ain't let in fer ter see her man. Prove he's been taken away an' ain't in there, jest a-hidin' from her. Prove, ma'am, that he is a gentleman."

Diana covered her face with her hands.

"I'll do everything that I can. Poor George, poor aunt Emma, poor uncle Will, poor Charlotte!"

Joe snorted: "Huh! Poor Rosa Kreppel!"

"Yes, Mr. O'Connor, poor Rosa Kreppel! I can see all sides and everybody's point of view. I'm sorry for you, too, Mr. O'Connor, but I mustn't stay any longer. I must find Mrs. Kreppel. When Mrs. Kreppel knows how sorry I am for her, it will be a great step toward reaching an understanding."

She adjusted her hat and the filmy veil over the hat-brim, worn to keep her hair in place. Joe looked at her with grudging admiration.

"Ye've a large contract, ma'am, but I don't envy ye the job. I suppose it's 'woman ter woman', an' the old story. Only this time, mebbe, it's lady ter woman—the poor, dacent-livin', honest woman axin' the fine young lady ter allow her ter kape her own husband—which the lady won't."

He shook his head.

"No, ma'am, I don't envy ye the job at all, at all! It ain't ter my likin'. Ye'll find yer 'up against it.' Perticklelily sorry I am fer ye ter be up against it wid Rosa."

Miss Vaughan broke down and sobbed.

"Do you think," she moaned, "that I am trying to take away a woman's husband. You don't believe one word of all I've told you! I wanted to consider public opinion, wanted to be kind, wanted to spare the feelings of everybody concerned! You don't know how my uncle and aunt have suffered; how good they've been to me, motherless and fatherless, whom practically they adopted to bring up not merely as an orphaned child of their friend, but as their daughter. This trouble that has come to their old age is my opportunity to prove how dearly I love them. I've struggled to protect them from misconception, from disbelief in the miracles of science—yes, if needs be, from scandal which is the worst that can possibly occur."

Joe's red fists were tight-clenched till the knuckles showed white, like knobs, through the skin.

"Hev a care of what ye say so free-spoken in this 'ere town," he warned her. "Scandal's an ugly word, ma'am. There ain't none ye'll find what won't stand up fer Rosa."

"Don't you see? Can't you understand? I am not here to harm Rosa!" cried the discouraged Diana. "I shall and will help her. She may be so intelligent that she will listen to reason. It's the only thing I ask. I'm going to her and sha'n't lose another moment. I'm heartbroken for you, too, but I can't, I fear, help you. Good-by, Mr. O'Connor."

She left the office. Joe watched her down the street; saw her turn the corner; saw idlers at doors and windows and the few passersby at that hour crane their necks to look after her; knew that she would find old Klein in his restaurant and that also

she might find Rosa—else, as also he knew, she would wait, talking with Klein till Rosa would come.

From that point on, Joe knew no more. His myopic intelligence could not see further. Going back again to his desk, he heaved a heartbroken sigh. He did not, however, forget to close the street door most carefully, for he wished to be alone.





**HISTORY THREE**  
**DIANA LENDS A HAND**  
**XX————XXIII.**

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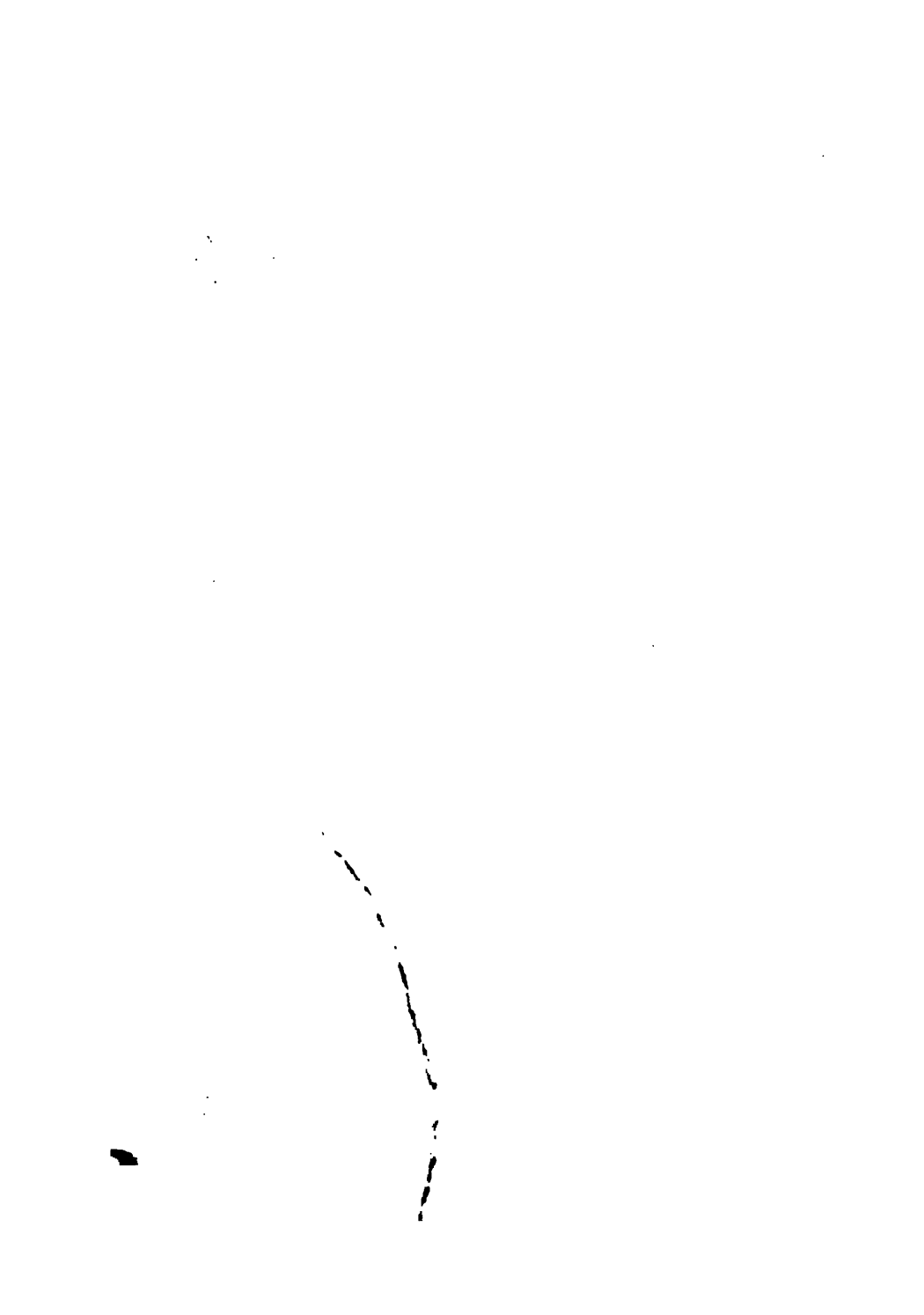
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*"Character is a slow and gradual growth through action in relation to the circumstances of life; it can not be fashioned suddenly and through reflection only."*—MAUDSLEY.



## CHAPTER XX.

### AGAIN KLEIN'S RESTAURANT.

It was a quarter before noon. Diana did not know that presently the shoe factory would be emptied of its swarming numbers of men, women and children, and that as many as could squeeze into Klein's restaurant and afford it would go there for refreshment. Already some were feeding after the fashion of the lower-class German who is not nice in his table manners. Miss Vaughan could not repress an exclamation of disgust. As others had done in North Harrow, they stared at her, and for a moment—but for a moment only—she stood blushing, somewhat disconcerted, in the doorway. Was it possible that George, as fastidious as herself, was once a waiter in such a place? It was difficult to believe true. It was *not* true. She could not believe it. The red-armed, towsled-haired young woman, then, must be Rosa Kreppel? Diana took a step forward to accost her, but old Klein blocked the way. "You vill speak mit mein cook?" he asked sternly. "She takes de place here of Frau Kreppel, meine Tochter, und mein son-in-laws, who is not mit us now, young lady. Kindly tell me your peesness und vat table yo vill haf?"

All eyes were on her. All knives and forks were halted midway between heaped-up plates of food

and overfilled mouths whose greasy nether lips dropped in amazement. The moment was awful—so awful that Diana's courage oozed from her sickened pores faster than she could grapple with and hold it, though she managed to ask faintly:

"May I see you in private, Mr. Klein? I should like to speak with both you and your daughter, Mrs. Kreppel. Isn't she in the house somewhere? There must be another room where I may sit down."

"Ach, ja! Come mit me, if you plees, Fräulein. Ve haf a small room."

The Germans went on eating. Klein led the way to where Rosa and he had had their first interview with Emil. Associations, however, were not troubling the old man's mind. Without Rosa, he was helpless and mindless, too; for his discomfort was physical, benumbing his depressed spirits till it was impossible for him to think.

When in the room with the door shut, "I am Miss Vaughan, a cousin of Mr. George Savidge," Diana said, bravely announcing what she believed was a thunderbolt. She could not forbear taking an innocent pose. Nothing happened. Her announcement fell flat.

"So-o? Und vat can I do for you, Mees Vaughan?" old Klein asked her.

"There's nothing that I want done for me, Mr. Klein," the girl answered gently. "I am here to bring comfort to your daughter—to—to represent Mr. Savidge and Doctor Savidge, my uncle—in fact, the entire family sympathizing with your misfortune; to learn of anything I can do, that George can—oh!" came with a burst of real feeling through her superficial girlish self-consciousness, "I don't

know how to express all that I feel! If only I can help you a little I shall be so glad! Believe me, Mr. Klein, so very, very glad!"

A light dawned on Klein.

"Help vat?" he asked with suspicion. "You know somet'ings? You are villing to speak mit Rosa, und you know vere dey hides Emil at de hospital? You know dat?"

"He isn't hidden. He has been taken home to his heart-broken mother and sister. The experience of losing George has nearly killed them. My uncle has aged ten years."

"Georg?" Klein repeated, dazed. He pronounced the name German fashion. "Georg, Fräulein? I know nottings of any Georg, aber, Emil he makes de misery in dis house mit meinsel und mein Tochter, die arme Rosa. You know somet'ings about dat hospital vere de most noble and highborn Herrn Doktors dey hides Emil?"

Diana groaned in despair: "There is no Emil—not two persons. The man whom you knew as Emil Kreppel is Mr. George Savidge, a gentleman who would die rather than bring distress to any woman. It is all a horrible mistake. He was not married to your daughter Rosa—at least, the ceremony was not legally performed when he didn't know what he was about. We will spend any amount of money to protect your daughter's good name; for we understand how the unfortunate event took place and that she isn't to blame; George isn't; nobody is. We——"

As silently as she had appeared at the door of Kreppel's room at the hospital, when Doctor Howard's patient was clamoring for identification as



George Savidge, Rosa now loomed before Diana's eyes. Woman instinct told Miss Vaughan who it was. But the majesty of the restaurant-keeper's daughter, the quality of a beauty so sternly repressing grief that it was become in itself a patent of nobility, entitling her to rank with outraged wives, made Rosa Kreppel's presence in the highest sense commanding. The younger girl and unmarried chit that Diana felt herself to be shrank within her dainty shell, feeling very small and helpless indeed. Miss Vaughan faltered the words that George Savidge had used when confronted by the same overwhelming personality. "Who is that woman that has just come in?" she asked old Klein, who turned his head to look.

"Rosa? Ach, R-rrosa!" was all he could say. Sobbing his relief, he repeated: "Ach, R-rrosa!" and went out. Rosa closed the door after him.

"You are——?"

"Miss Vaughan," Diana said quickly.

The hostess shook her stately head.

"I do not know you. We have no rooms. This is a restaurant. The hotel is not so far and is comfortable."

Impulsively Diana came nearer.

"I don't wish a room, Mrs. Kreppel. I'm stopping over a day at the hotel, because I wanted badly to see you. I've come with—with the best intentions," she stammered, because Rosa stared. "You may have heard that I'm Mr. Savidge's cousin?"

"Mr. Savidge's cousin?" Rosa echoed, greatly puzzled. "Who is it? He is not here."

"No; he is not here. His father has taken him,

while I've stayed behind to explain to you. I thought, maybe, you'd been told at the hospital."

Fire flashed from Rosa's eye.

"They tell me nothing," she said. "My man is at the hospital, very sick, and the Herr Doktor will not let me in. I stay morning and evening at the door, and do not get in. You come, Fräulein, to tell me something about my man?"

"He has been taken home."

"Nein!" Rosa said fiercely, "he is locked up. I have not been more than one hour away from the big door that I watch to get in, and I am waiting to bring my man home. The Herr Doktor tells me my man does not know who I am and speaks English; but he will not get well till I bring him home. I know best what to do for him. After I have him, I can make him well."

Tears came into Diana's eyes.

"How wicked! Did they tell you that and not more? He is perfectly well, Mrs. Kreppel."

The joy on Rosa's face frightened Diana.

"The Herr Doktor tells you? You—you—a lady, he tells the truth. Gott sei dank! I go to my man. Danke, Fräulein, danke schön!"

Diana seized her arm.

"Wait, Mrs. Kreppel! He isn't there—really, he is not! He has been taken out by his people and is already at home. But he didn't run away from you. Only he is, we fear, still too weak to endure a scene before we're certain that he is cured. It would be too dreadful! The shock of being told all that he is supposed to have done might be too much for him. He thinks now of only his father

and mother, and was wild to get back, so he hasn't yet realized the situation. Doctor Howard says he can not be made to realize it till later, if at all, and Doctor Connelly and uncle Will say the same. It's a remarkable case of—er—'ambulatory automatism,' I think they call it, Mrs. Kreppel."

Rosa's passion got the better of her.

"I know my man is locked up in the hospital, and if you try to keep me from him you, too, have reasons," she panted, fiercer than any tigress deprived of her young. What can *you* know about my man? Who are you?"

"I am his cousin by adoption. I've lived in his home and I know everything. If you'll listen, I'll tell you," Diana said.

All color was shaken from Rosa's face. She became a glaring, ghastly white.

"You are my man's cousin? A lady, then, and you love him? That is his secret!" she gasped, choking, "aber——"

She paused; then went on:

"Aber, Fräulein, it is too late for you to come. We were married many weeks, and I do not care what he did with ladies before that. I make him happy, because I care only to make him well."

Diana blushed scarlet.

"We were brought up together like brother and sister, Mrs. Kreppel; we——"

Rosa's lip curled in a sneer.

"Ach, ja! Bruder und Schwester! All the same, Fräulein, you can not have him. *Es ist mein Mann.*"

"Let us speak German," said Diana soothingly. "We shall understand each other ever so much bet-

ter! Won't you sit down?" She drew a chair forward for herself. "May I? Thank you."

Rosa, however, continued to stand.

"I want to tell you," Diana went on in her carefully educated German—at ease because cases and numbers had to be thought of before speech, and the inner process of translation made her remarks sound impersonal to her own ears, giving them, she believed, weight with Rosa—"I want, Mrs. Kreppel, to tell you that Mr. Savidge wandered from home several weeks ago and was lost while his reason was temporarily affected. We have to our satisfaction identified him with the supposed 'Emil Kreppel' who came to you at that time. Kreppel was his mother's maiden name."

Rosa was no fool. The fog on her brain lifted. She was clear-headed and calmer. Every detail of the picture that Diana made stood forth distinctly—the homely little room, the incongruously graceful young woman in her becoming tailored suit of violet homespun, irreproachably plain in cut and finish, with long white kid gloves to the elbow, meeting the short full sleeves; with her picture hat, of the magnificent plumes, adding distinction to a delicately featured, super-refined face of a type unknown to North Harrow. Rosa hated her. She was part of Kreppel's past, was she? Certainly, then, she must love him! Why else ask a wife to give up her husband? Had ladies no morals? Beyond doubt, this was a lady; but Kreppel had left ladies' society to marry a wife not a lady and yet one who knew her rights. She was able to make Kreppel happy quite as she was. She could not give up her husband to the first woman who asked. Hers was a lawful

marriage with which no other woman should interfere.

"I have forgotten the most respected Fräulein's name." Rosa spoke in German.

"I am Miss Vaughan."

To put a leading question, Rosa then steadied her voice: "Where did the Fräulein say that Kreppel's home was?"

"That I mustn't say—not just now; it would be unwise, wouldn't it? We can't let you see him—can't run the risk of a scene."

"You will not tell me where he has gone, but you ask me to believe you have taken him away from the Herr Doktor—from the hospital?"

Rosa's bosom heaved.

"You ask too much, Fräulein Vaughan. I am his wife. You can not take him."

Diana's heart was wrung with pity. This was real. She could not resent Rosa's anger, let the poor creature say or do what she would.

Rosa's eyes were blazing.

"You tell me lies—lies!" she cried still in her own tongue. "A fine lady you are to want the husband of a poor woman! Am I the kind to sit still and let him go to you? What would you be if you had him? Not his wife. You knew him before me. Did you—are—are——?"

Fear shook her. She moistened dry lips to ask huskily:

"Are you married to him? Did you, perhaps, marry Kreppel before—before me?"

Tears rained down Diana's cheeks.

"No—not that! I'm not married. George and I—we are simply——"

"You lie!" Rosa cried with greater fury. "I see now that you love him, but he did not marry you. Perhaps you sent him about his business—the way fine ladies do to lovers when they play with a man and expect him one day to come back to be played with some more? I do not play. When I loved I showed it and was not ashamed; for what shame is love to an honest woman? I asked Kreppel no questions after I found that he did not wish to tell me who he was. I—I did not know he spoke English, even. But what is it to me! When I found out I did not care. Any dog in this country can speak English. He thought, perhaps, that I would like a German waiter better. He wanted to marry me. Before he was hurt on the head he loved me very, very much."

Still Diana was weeping.

"Poor George! He did not know! Oh, this is too dreadful! I give up. No power on earth, I suppose, can make you see as we do, Mrs. Kreppel? But you have our sympathy."

It was insult to injury. Rosa came close. Her hand was lifted as if to strike her rival. Diana did not flinch. Physical cowardice was unknown to her.

"You think a lady," she panted, "can say to an honest woman who is not a lady: 'Your husband is born a gentleman and so he did not marry you'? You want my husband, Fräulein, and that is not honest. You shall not take him. Tell the Herr Doktor at the hospital to let me see Kreppel only once. I will go there with you to see him. Take me."

Diana seized on the hope extended to her.

"You will? I'm thankful! Doctor Howard can explain. The man whom you knew as 'Emil Kreppel' is no longer at the hospital. Come with me to let me prove it."

"I shall not see him if I go?"

"You can not. If you'll go with me you'll be convinced that he has been taken away by his family. Come, Mrs. Kreppel!"

Rosa laughed.

"I will go alone, then, not with—you!" she said. "I will not walk in the streets with any woman who tries to steal my husband. You are a devil. I know very well what has happened to Emil. He is crazy, so he says that he is not married. But my certificate! See?"

She pulled a paper from her bosom.

"Does this mean nothing—this?" She struck the paper with her hand. "I have it ready to show doctors, lawyers—anybody! There is no one in North Harrow who does not know that I am married. Ask about the wedding. The Schiels will tell you; Joe O'Connor—anybody! You think that I am poor? But I am rich. My father makes money in the restaurant and it is for me—his daughter. The whole town eats here and the whole town knows me. Ask if I am married."

"I don't need to ask. I know that it was done in good faith," Diana said as pityingly as patiently. "That isn't the question."

"What is it you come to find out, then? If I have Emil home he will be well in two days. The hospital makes him sick. It makes a great many people worse than when they go there. Doctor Howard gave me medicine to make me sleep. and he is a

wicked man. His medicine did not hurt me, because I am strong; but it hurt Kreppel, who was weak from his sickness, and it made him sleep—

sleep till he knew nothing. When he woke then he was crazy.”

Triumphantly again she approached Diana.

“Because you are a lady you think it makes the difference? Ladies can not love,” she declared. “The ladies I have seen are not good for much, and they looked something like you—not exactly, but something like—enough to show the blood was not red in their veins. If I got Emil home”—she looked round superbly—“do you suppose that I would turn him out after I found I could not cure him? Never! Always he will be my man, and you can not have him for yours—the law will not let you.”

The room swam before Diana’s eyes. For want of food and rest she was faint, and also she was bitterly disappointed. As a missionary she had failed. The sooner she left North Harrow the better—and yet—and yet? Diana was obstinately bent on offering Rosa a last chance for change of heart. She could not bear to be misjudged; could not have George and her uncle’s entire family—gentle, cultivated, kindly women, with the warm hearts of aunt Emma and Charlotte—one and all cruelly misjudged. Yes, she would give Rosa Kreppel—or Rosa Klein, as the poor thing was legally—another chance. She would tell her so. If Rosa should not accept it, she, Diana, would have done everything in human power to ease a bitter, if unintentional, wrong. She rose to go.



"I shall be at the hotel for one more night," she said. "Communicate with me there, Mrs. Kreppel. Send for me and I will go to you, or come to me and I will see you. You may feel that I can be of use or, at least, can offer comfort. It's hard to take in all I've said. One needs time to work it out, I think. Good-by.

"Guten Tag, Fräulein."

"Ja," Diana said with a smile, "guten Tag und —aufwiedersehn!"

To which Rosa refused answer.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### ROSA PREPARES TO CALL ON DIANA.

The restaurant was packed. Diana had considerable difficulty in making her way around the tables to the door leading out into the street, and she was watched with amusement by the town; for practically the greater part of North Harrow surged from the factory to gorge itself at mid-day with Klein's table d'hôte dinner.

The diners—or, more correctly, feeders—did not wait for the lady to get beyond earshot. The sight of her reminded them of the motoring party that had run off with Kreppel, and they whispered their comments. Why was the lady left behind? What business had she in Klein's restaurant? Did she, or did she not, come to blows with Rosa? It could not be possible that Rosa would let Emil go without a word against his sneaking away with his fine rich friends. Some one whispered that Rosa did not know of it. Then there was an uproar. A German crowd does not move quickly. "Was ist's? Was ist's?" they asked one another with intensest excitement, the while automatically eating and drinking. It occurred to no one to stop eating, and food proved no impediment to speech.

"Was ist's?"

"Rosa does not know Kreppel is gone. She thinks he is yet in the hospital."

"What will she do when she knows?"

"Ach, Gott! Who can say what Rosa will do?"

"Ask Klein."

"Will Klein know?"

"Ask Rosa."

"Herr Gott! Herr Gott! R-rrosa? Nimmer!"

Long before that point was reached, Diana had escaped and was far on her way to the hotel. She had not understood the confused murmur of voices, had not tried to understand; for she was discouraged by these people. She could not, however, abandon Rosa Kreppel. But nerves are unstrung when emotions are too fiercely stirred. Never had Miss Vaughan been under so great an emotional strain. She would throw it off in writing. A carefully explicit letter to her uncle would dispose of the evening. She could sleep, then, in the hideous room for one more night; and 'phone for the car to be sent for her early next morning. Only a few hours must be passed in the suspense of waiting. Mrs. Kreppel should have her chance.

If poor Diana had seen Rosa stride into the restaurant at the sound of the customers' noise, she would have lost hope of winning her over. Klein was not there. He had gone out, or, possibly, upstairs to his bedroom. Rosa gave no thought to Klein.

"Trouble here?" she asked. "What is it?"

Some voice piped above the others:

"The lady."

Rosa paled.

"What of her?"

"She was with the old gentleman who took Kreppel away from the hospital."

Rosa clutched the back of a chair.

"What's that you say? Took Kreppel? Took him when I wasn't there? But he is sick, very sick! Nobody is allowed to see him. No; not one—only the doctors. You saw the other doctor come in an automobile, but he couldn't take Kreppel. He was to come to see him and to cure him. Doctor Howard told me so; I knew it all the time."

The crowd was silent.

"Why don't you speak? Rosa looked wildly from one to another.

"Gott in Himmel, speak!" she screamed. "You made noise enough before I came to stop you. Did anybody see the strange doctor take away Kreppel?"

"He saw."

The speaker jerked his thumb in the direction of Rudolf Birnstein. "Birnstein saw, and others, too. Where were you, Frau Kreppel?"

"Where was I?" she asked huskily. "I? When was it?"

"Yesterday afternoon. Before supper."

"I was here then, cooking supper for"—a string of oaths qualified the restaurant's patrons—"you, dumb-heads. Ach, Gott! Which way did the automobile go?"

Heads were solemnly shaken. Nobody knew.

"You can't remember? A pack of you, dumb beasts, stood staring at an automobile and saw Kreppel put in and did not see which way the people went who took him?" She wrung her hands. "Ach, Gott! Why was I not at the hospital!"

A child shouted:

"But the lady knows, Fräulein, Rosa, Frau Kreppel—bitte!"

"Ach, ja! The lady!"

Vehement talk with gesticulation broke out again in the room. There were surmises that the lady was gone back to the hospital. Some said that she was a trained nurse who came in the company of the strange doctor; others, that she was one of North Harrow's regular hospital nurses whom they saw often and knew by sight quite well. At that notion, the majority scoffed. When had they seen the purple gown, the hat with the ostrich feathers? Wouldn't North Harrow have remembered? The lady was a stranger. The old gentleman with her was a stranger. Both lady and gentleman were known to Doctor Connelly and to Doctor Howard. The typewriter girl from the hospital here put in her word.

"I was on ter her curves," she said, "from the moment she come sailin' inter the waitin'-room at the'ospital. Gee, wa'n't she grand! The airs she gave herself were colder'n ice-cream; but all the time she was smilin' as sweet as candied vi'lets. I got a page of histories all wrong jest a-watchin' her."

"What did she stay behind for?" asked Rosa.

Nobody knew.

"She invited me to call at the hotel. I'll go first to the hospital to make sure Kreppel isn't there," Rosa said. "After that, I'll find out from the lady where Kreppel is."

She went upstairs to change her house-dress for the street, and passing her father's door, noticed that it was ajar. Usually, Klein kept it tight shut.

His was the bedroom at the head of the stairs; Rosa's and Emil's room was directly above the restaurant. The servants were lodged over the kitchen, the washroom and the storerooms were at the rear of the house. The building was two-storied and rambling, as old houses in American country towns commonly are. The flooring, too, was old and shaky. Rosa stepped with infinite care not to have her footfall attract attention below stairs. She could not endure the thought of the coarse crowd wondering what she might be planning and how soon she would be ready to go out, and how behave after she reappeared among them.

How should she behave? She did not yet know. On the edge of the bed—their bed—she sat panting, staring at nothing, torn with agonizing doubt of the truth. For the moment she could not rouse herself to action; not cross the room even for her best dress which hung in a curtained corner, nor stoop to drag forth her best hat from the bandbox under the bed. Her temples wildly throbbed; her corset unendurably oppressed her. Lately, she had worn a snug corset to give a trimmer turn to her full figure, and in the privacy of her bedroom or the kitchen she loosened it for freer breathing. To-day she dared disarrange nothing. While so passionately she trembled, it would take time to change from her working clothes to the proper costume in which to call on a lady. She knew that she was beautiful and could out-blaze Diana, who had small features and no figure at all. But Miss Vaughan wore fine clothing of rich materials; she dressed to suit her style and was attractive. Everything in the way of elusive color, slim grace, a sinuous trail-

ing charm over the entire person, and the "grand air"—that of absolute distinction which Rosa Kreppel could not in a lifetime acquire—Diana had. On a sudden, Rosa appreciated it. A storm of jealousy swept from her crown of red-gold hair to the burning soles of her feet. She was on fire. Of all women that woman, that particular woman who said she was his adopted cousin, should not have Kreppel!

Her impudence in claiming him! Her falsehood, her cowardice to lie, pretending that she did not love Emil! If not, why rob the wife who did love him, the woman who had the right to her "Mann"?

Rosa took her throbbing head between her hands. Suppose, on going to the hospital, she should find Kreppel really gone, what should she do? Should she have to drag herself humbly to the fine young lady and make her tell through pity what had become of Emil? It would be hard. Could she do it?

Somewhat dully, she read in her mind a blurred map of attack. She could prove to Miss Vaughan's satisfaction that Kreppel was quite happy at home. He liked the restaurant, and never went out on those nights that he might have got off if he had wished it. He couldn't read the newspaper, a German paper, without difficulty, so his wife read to him and he enjoyed her reading. Rosa thought her strongest point would be to show Emil happier with her than he could ever have been before coming to North Harrow. If happy in his former home, why did he run away? Yes, that was a strong argument. She must remember it. A man may be born a gentleman, but like plain people better. All sorts, gentlemen and others, were her admirers before

Kreppel. She liked a real gentleman, with Emi's honorable intentions—no sensualist and flatterer, stepping out of his class only to do her harm.

Now that Kreppel was ill, it was his wife's duty by careful nursing to bring his sick mind back to health. The young lady had not seen him raving mad and get over it. Rosa had. She could tell her that—tell the fine cousin that—and then what could the cousin say? Every one in North Harrow was witness to Emil's working night after night in the restaurant, in perfect health, till the quarrel when he fell and struck his head. Doctor Howard could testify to Kreppel's ravings when he did not know his wife, and his recovery when he knew her and called her by name, and she had been obliged to interpret his queer German that the doctor could not understand without her, the wife, the despised wife whom Kreppel would not let out of his sight from the moment that he knew her and recognized where he was.

Afterward had come the strange long sleep, changing him so that he did not know his wife. They said he was well—was cured. Cured of what? Cured of love for her and the home in which he had been happy? She wasn't the sort of woman that a man would turn from in horror because he was come to his senses. Rosa was no fool, and she knew men better than to believe a thing like that. The hospital had changed Kreppel. Medicines did it. Still, Emil must not be allowed to see Miss Vaughan. Of course, it must be Miss Vaughan whom he loved before coming to North Harrow. Many men were so. Rosa would forgive him, would not reproach him nor be hard on him for the little



things that all men will do when tempted. He used, perhaps, to kiss his adopted cousin?

Rosa clenched her hands, digging the fingernails into the palms till they cut her. Men kiss and women believe in them, and the cousin thought him serious. Could she, Rosa, forgive a kiss? Yes. She must not expect Kreppel to be more than other men in those little things—only in the big, the great big choice that he must make in coming back to his wife, leaving those fine people forever. She could learn to control her temper. She would not scold, as she had done in the past. She must have her man. Crazy or not crazy, in sickness and in health, he was her man, and none should come between them nor pretend to deny the right that they had to each other.

Quite calmly she changed her dress; then went out into the hall. Passing, she looked into Klein's room. It was empty. She went in for a second, closing the door, and when she came out again she closed the door behind her. No one heard her leave the house. The restaurant was more than usually noisy; men were smoking, and she thought she heard Klein's voice haranguing them. She did not heed it, for she did not care. She went out the kitchen way, and roundabout to the hospital, because she did not wish to pass the restaurant windows and be waylaid at the restaurant door. She had the afternoon before her and intended to make use of it.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### GLADYS MARIE CHANGES HER WAY OF WEARING HER HAIR.

"Huh!" Maggie Schiel said from behind the black-draped window, sitting where she could peer over the "reasonably priced coffin for adults" and recognize passersby on the opposite side of the street, "there goes the lady what scraped acquaintance wid Gladys Marie up ter North Harrar House, but wa'n't satisfied till she got some scrapin's off me, tew. Mebbe she's a detective, Gustav."

"Was willst du?"

"I say, mebbe that lady in here this mornin', pretendin' as how she near broke her neck an' little Gretchen's, right in front of this very door, is a detective after Kreppel. That's why she's out early, airin' herself an' askin' questions."

Mrs. Schiel's excited fingers prodded her needle into the crape bow that she was fastening to a hat.

"After she's had time ter get back ter the hotel an' upstairs, I guess I might as well run round ter call on Gladys Marie. We'll find out what's in the wind. Ye'll give the chillern their supper, Gustav."

Gustav's answer was conciliatory. He came from a further corner of the store, rubbing his hands together while pleading a favor.

"Thou willst not be away for long?" he inquired wistfully. "Thou knowest the children

are not so good behaved when thou art not here, and I must undress them for bed. There will be talk at Klein's. If I hear news, I will hasten home to tell thee early."

"Klein's?" Maggie Schiel said with scorn. When her husband spoke in German she answered in her own tongue, though long familiarity with his language had made it—German—entirely comprehensible to her. "I tell yer, Gustav, Gladys Marie ain't no fool—if she is my sister! She can learn off'n that 'ere lady in five minutes more'n you Dutchmen an' women up ter the restaurant could learn in ten years. I'm goin' ter Gladys Marie right away—quick; an' I'll come back an' tell the news when I'm good and ready. Doncher dare sneak over ter Klein's an' leave them poor chillern alone when I ain't here ter take care of 'em! Do ye remember the bad fall ye let little Friedrich have when I was out fer only half an hour, an' trusted him ter yer?"

Schiel was conscience-stricken. He hung his head, while Mrs. Schiel made preparations for a lengthy visit. She would, he knew, be away indefinitely. It was an excellent opportunity to punish him.

She laid out materials for supper. Sternly she showed him the children's night clothes, hung in a row on hooks in the nursery closet, pointed out the small toothbrushes in mugs, and opened a bureau-drawer which held the youngest child's curling-kids—instruments of torture to which the unhappy father knew that little Gretchen never submitted without a protracted struggle and howls. When he saw them he winced. Maggie was orderly. A dozen times she charged him not to get the nursery upset with leaving the children's clothes "messin' round."

As a final caution :

"No matter how they cuts up," she said, while stealing from the house in the hope that the children might not see her go and clamor to be taken along, "ye tend ter it that they says their prayers decent—in German an' English, tew, remember!"

"Ja wohl!"

Diana had reached the hotel. She toiled up the flight of stairs to her room and, once within, she rang the bell for the chambermaid.

"Run down to the office, please, Gladys Marie, and fetch me writing-paper and envelopes. Is there an ink-well to spare that I may have in my room? Are there pens—a pen-handle? If not, please go to the nearest shop and buy them. Here's money."

Gladys Marie put her hands behind her back.

"I don't want yer money; I like yer," she blurted, exceedingly red and uncomfortable. "Say! I've got a bottle of jest dandy purple ink up ter my room, an' pens. Do yer like a long narrar pen-p'int best, or a stub?"

She looked Miss Vaughan up and down.

"Long and narrar, I guess—ain't it? Them kind what writes so elegant p'inted-like? My ink is the color of the suit yer got on, an' I've swiped a waste-paper basketful of the finest hotel note. I'll go halves wid yer."

"Thanks! A few sheets will do. I didn't, you see, intend writing letters, so I brought no writing-materials in my bag."

Diana spoke gratefully. Gladys Marie was the only friend she had made in North Harrow. She did not count Doctor John Howard nor her uncle's

life-long old friend, the distinguished Doctor Connelly. Both men had promised to look after her, yet she had managed successfully to elude their kindly vigilance up to the present moment. Determined to work on her own lines and to fail or to succeed in her own way, she dreaded masculine interference. The heroine-worship of this free-and-easy little serving-maid was a boon to her; because amusing, it soothed her tired nerves.

"Run quickly, child, to get back again with the things I want. I should be delighted 'to go halves,' but I don't need more than a very little. The purple ink will do beautifully. Will you post my letters without anybody else's seeing the address? Can you manage that?"

"Yer bet I kin!"

Gladys Marie winked. Diana, blushing, bit her lip not to reprove her. She was fast learning "to get on with the people," she thought, but would be thankful when the lesson-hour was over and she could go back to the shelter of true refinement. Long as the time was, dull afternoon and night would soon be gone and set her free. Meanwhile, there was reasonable ground for her hope that Mrs. Kreppel might call. On the plea of resting, Miss Vaughan would excuse herself to the doctors and write them cordial notes of farewell.

When Gladys Marie brought ink and paper, she found Diana rummaging in her travelling-bag for some gift to please the girl.

"Will these gloves fit you?"

Two broad red hands were extended in answer. Their owner grinned intelligently. "Look! Guess them o' yourn ain't any size seven; air they?"

"Only five-and-three-quarters, I'm afraid. I've an unnaturally thin hand that squeezes up to nothing. But no matter! Come over and look at my things. Of all that's here, what should you like the best?" Diana asked in a burst of reckless generosity.

"On the level? Honest? Yer ain't foolin'?"

"Of all that's here. Of course," Miss Vaughan said, laughing, "I didn't bring a large assortment. See this 'baby Irish' collar-and-cuffs set. Shouldn't you like that?"

"I dunno—yes'm, it's beautiful."

Gladys Marie stood first on one foot, then on the other, twisting the ends of her soiled windsor necktie round her fingers.

"Is there anything else you'd rather have?" Diana asked gently.

"There's somethin' I—I'd like better'n anythin' in all the whole wide world!"

"What?"

"I'd like ter try on yer hat—jest fer once; an' I'd take it right off an' wouldn't hurt it. After I'd seen if it's reelly becomin', my sister, Mrs. Schiel, could make me one in the same style. I'd be awful obleeged if yer'd let me try it on!"

Diana was in a quandary. She looked at Gladys Marie's untidy head; then, sidelong, at her own reflection in the mirror. Needless to say, the coveted hat was worn by its owner, and Gladys Marie must have believed that she slept in it. But woman's wit is quick; Diana's was equal to the occasion.

"It won't be becoming, Gladys Marie, before you've dressed your hair as I do. Run away and try."

Removing the hat, she shook down her shimmering hair.

"Now, watch me twist it up again! See? How simple! Can't you do it? Try it in your own room. Afterward come to me, and, if I find that the new way of wearing your hair is becoming, I sha'n't lend you this hat—because I make it a rule not to let any one try on my things—but I'll do better. As soon as I get home, I'll have a hat like this made to order of the very best materials in any color you wish." She had an additional inspiration. "White would be prettiest; wouldn't it?"

Gladys Marie's eyes danced with delight.

"My sakes, yes! White'd go wid anythin'. I'll change my hair as quick as ever I kin."

She rushed from the room, accidentally slammed the door, rushed back to apologize and, finally, was gone. Diana gave a sigh of relief. The hair-dressing, she shrewdly guessed, would take an hour, and in an hour one can say more than enough by letter. She composed herself to write. First, she dashed off the two courteous little notes to old Doctor Connelly and young Doctor Howard, respectively. In case one or the other gentleman should call, the note might be delivered downstairs, with the excuse that she was endeavoring to rest but would report in person at the hospital before leaving North Harrow in her uncle's motor-car next morning. That matter settled, she gave her whole mind to her letter to her uncle.

"DEAR UNCLE WILL: You know I don't have secrets from you, so at once I declare that I'm near failure and am on the verge of discouragement. Thus far, nothing worse has happened to me; but,

oh! uncle, it's all so pitiful—the whole thing so dreadful and so sad!

"To begin with, I've seen the woman. She is handsome, in a big, coarse way that has already become moulded through love into an elemental grandeur hard to describe on paper. I mean that her trouble, being genuine, has brought out the elemental strength of a nature which might never have been wholly developed without love for a man more innately refined than herself. She is not open to reason. The poor thing feels much too intensely to see and to hear also. The blind, you know, have the sense of touch over-developed to compensate for not seeing, and it's that way with Rosa Kreppel's mind. I am giving her a last chance, uncle Will. I shall stay at North Harrow for one more night. If she doesn't call on me before bedtime, I shall 'phone you to send the car round early in the morning, and shall reach home at about the hour that you will receive this letter. But if she should come, if she should break down and need me. I shall stay to do what I can. I am waiting, listening, counting the moments till she comes, and am writing to you to have some one to talk to in this place where every man's hand seems against me, and every woman's, too!

"But I am forgetting. I have made one friend and have come by her honestly. She is the little chambermaid-waitress of North Harrow House—'the hotel,' if you please! Plain 'North Harrow House' is too simple an appellation. Gladys Marie is not simple. She is a bundle of complexities, frankly underhanded, and honestly ready to go all lengths for any one appealing to her imagination.



She admires me. Still more, she admires my clothes, which I thought in good taste, quiet enough for a country town, and she is watching her chance to try on my hat and any article of wearing apparel which I may foolishly allow to fall into her clutches. I have given her a present of a lace collar-and-cuffs' set, and have sent her to her own room to——"

A knock sounded at the door.

"Come in," Diana said, with her pen suspended above the last words she had written, and Gladys Marie reappeared.

"Say! I can't do my hair in the new style, ma'am, afore my sister leaves. I run acrost her in the hall, an' she's goin' ter visit wid me till supper-time. How 'bout evenin'? Couldn't I run in an' show yer how it looks afore yer go ter sleep ter-night?"

"Certainly! But, Gladys Marie, first take these notes down to the clerk in the office, and if—er—any woman calls to see me have her come up; but if any man should call—it will be either Doctor Connelly or Doctor Howard—I beg to be excused. The notes explain. Remember, won't you, that 'I beg to be excused'? I'll see a woman, no matter who, so there can't be a mistake about it—any woman, but no man. You'll give the message to the night-clerk and to the hotel proprietor?"

Gladys Marie nodded.

"Yep; I will all right! An' I'll be up ag'in wid yer supper on a tray, wid the ice-water, an' me hair fixed. My sister, Mrs. Schiel, kin help me fix it, so it'll be easier fer her ter understan' 'bout the hat yer goin' ter send me. My, yer—yer awful good!"

Diana smiled. She was very tired—too tired to be diverted by Gladys Marie.

"Am I? I'm glad you think so. Now, child, run along and let me write. Do what I ask, and I'll find another little present among my things in the bag. Hurry! That's a good girl!"

"Yes, ma'am!"

Gladys Marie went, and Diana continued her letter.

"\* \* \* \* \* Stars show where I was interrupted by the chambermaid. I intended to give an amusing sketch of her, but I'm out of the vein. I've arranged not to be interrupted again by any one but Mrs. Kreppel. Gladys Marie has her sister, the undertaker's wife, to gossip with for an hour or two, so I'm safe in that quarter.

"Here am I writing actually in my coat and hat, wondering why I'm tired to death! It is Gladys Marie who makes me afraid to remove a stitch. I took off my hat to let down my hair, and absentmindedly jammed the hat back on my 'aching brow' for no other reason than that there isn't a safer place. But this is nonsense! In a minute I'll be 'comfy' and return to you, dearest. The ink sha'n't have time to dry on the page."

\* \* \* \* \*

"More stars! They mean that I've changed the air of the room, my hair is in a neat pigtail, I've put on slippers and my gorgeous Chinese gown, and feel almost at ease, while far less melancholy. I've a presentiment that I shall conquer Mrs. Kreppel yet! It's only natural for her to distrust me. What can she believe? Our interview was stormy but not long, so I've given her time to weigh my words. She can't help but see that I mean well! I am

intensely sorry for her. Wait a minute! Somebody's knocking.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The somebody, uncle dear, was not Gladys Marie. It was the office clerk, who says that Mrs. Kreppel is downstairs. She wishes to see me, so I've sent for her to come up to my room. I'm exultant—full of hope. It is something to have compelled her to seek me out; isn't it? I'll finish this letter after she has gone. Dear, dear uncle Will, I'll do my best! For your sake—George's, aunt Emma's and Charlotte's—you dear people that I devotedly love! Here she is. I mustn't write another word. She is knocking. Good-by! Good-by! The interview will soon be over, and I'll tell you the result in a word on the 'phone, but in detail by this letter before I close my eyes in sleep to-night. Whichever way it ends, I shall be too excited to sleep. God grant it may end for the best!"

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE BREAKING POINT IS REACHED.

Diana went to the door. Outside stood Rosa Kreppel, so changed that Miss Vaughan hardly recognized her. Rosa's face was drawn and white; her eyes were desperate.

"Oh, Mrs. Kreppel, you're in great trouble, but don't—don't look like that! I can't bear to see you so!"

Diana put her hand before her eyes. "Come in," she said. "You know that what I told you this morning is true, and it crushes you. Isn't that it?"

Rosa came in and stood leaning against the wall. Her breath was jerked forth with a curious sobbing catch, such as is heard from a child's throat after an outbreak of exhausting passion.

"You are angry with me, Fräulein?" she said in German. "I have come now to speak to you quietly, so very quietly that you will understand."

Diana trembled. Rosa's voice dragged, heavy with suppressed feeling. She was not, however, come to plead but to explain; for, if not too angry, she was a just woman and appreciated the policy of patience to gain her point.

"You will not go away from here, Fräulein Vaughan? Not go," she reiterated, "before telling

me where to find my man? See—I am sorry for speaking roughly to you! It was wrong, wicked. I have a bad temper not fit to be forgiven by any lady, Fräulein.”

“But I do forgive you and I wasn’t offended! You haven’t done wrong. Do you suppose I can’t understand you, poor woman? Nobody blames you in the least,” said Diana, sobbing, still miserably unable to look into Rosa’s agonized face. “Let’s talk it over quietly. Come and sit down by me while we talk it over. We’ll make plans for your future. You mustn’t feel that because we’ve taken George you haven’t a future and a happy one.”

“Ach, ja, Fräulein, you will make me happy! I have walked the streets many, many miles till I felt quiet enough to come to speak to you. He is gone, my man, from the hospital. I know it, now, and I ought to have believed when you told me the truth. *Gott sei dank*, you have not yet gone away! You have waited till I should come. Will the highborn Fräulein listen while I tell why I am here?”

“I will listen. Tell me anything you like, only tell it sitting down. I can’t have you stand over there, Mrs. Kreppel.”

“I will stand here,” Rosa said gravely, “but I will not make the Fräulein angry any more. I have done enough.”

“Very well, then. Tell me. No matter what it is you ask I shall try to bring it about,” Diana said. “You don’t know the Savidges. Uncle Will is kind, and George is every inch a gentleman. Tell me what you wish us to do for you? It’s what I am staying here for.”

“You are staying here for me—me?”

Tears flooded Rosa's cheeks. She made no attempt to brush them away; in fact, seemed not to know they fell.

"You are staying here for me?" she repeated, "and I did not know, I could not guess. I was afraid, Fräulein, that you would not tell me where he is, would not give him back."

"Give him back?"

Diana was troubled.

"Is that what you ask, Mrs. Kreppel?"

"You do not love my man," Rosa said, with gathering fierceness. "I—I love him! Nobody else in North Harrow knows where he is, so I have come to ask you to tell me. You can not go away before telling. The Fräulein will tell? She will not break another woman's heart, because it is a poor woman while the Fräulein is a lady?"

"No, I will not break your heart." Diana hesitated. "I don't know what to say. I don't know, Mrs. Kreppel, how to put what I've already said into plainer words than I used this morning. If only I could reach you, touch you, help you, I would so gladly! What else can I say?"

"What else can the Fräulein say?"

Rosa drew herself to her full height.

"Must I, Kreppel's wife, tell the lady-cousin what to say to me? Good! I will tell her. I will teach mercy, will show her—love. The Fräulein is still very young and she can not love greatly. Let her tell me that she will give me back my man."

As if to ward off a blow Rosa shielded her face with her left arm.

"Do not say, Fräulein, that he has told you he does not love me! The poor boy does not know

what he tells people. He told it to the Herr Doktor at the hospital when he was sick. The Herr Doktor had my man to cure him. I do not say that I am wise, like the Herr Doktor, but I ask for a chance to show that I can cure Kreppel. Is it wrong for a wife to ask for her man, Fräulein?"

"It isn't wrong. Nobody accuses you of wrong, but——"

"The Fräulein will tell?" Rosa cried out eagerly. "She will not allow the separation of a wife from her man? What will the people who took him away do when he wakes and calls for Rosa? Shall Rosa not be there when he has his senses and wakes and calls? That one little moment I am asking of you, Fräulein. To be with my man when he wakes and calls for me."

She walked the floor in anguish, wringing her hands.

"Herr Gott! Herr Gott! If he should wake while I am talking here, not knowing where he is!"

Diana turned white to the lips. This was a woman of flesh and blood, pleading with her for the man to whom that woman had every reason to suppose herself legally married. Would it not mean Rosa's moral deterioration to have George fail to marry her? Could a straight-dealing, uneducated intelligence be taught to appreciate how there can be no lawful wedlock with one not of sound mind at the time that he subscribes to the marriage contract? But George might learn to love Rosa—might marry her!

In answer, Diana saw the young fellow's fastidious shrinking from everything coarse in the daily round of existence, and she knew that marriage

with Rosa Klein was impossible to him. Emil Kreppel was dead. He had died that George Savidge, a cultivated useful member of society, might live to be the prop of his parents' old age, to inherit wealth that he would administer wisely and well. George Savidge had responsibilities that no man from whose brain a cloud has been miraculously lifted can refuse to accept with gratitude to his Maker.

"No, Mrs. Kreppel, it isn't possible to give back to you the man that you have lost," she said. "I wish it might be! If I could, it seems to me at this moment, that I would do so, but I can not. He is changed; he is different. You couldn't love the man that he is at present, and he couldn't love you. Don't wish for it. It isn't I who have taken him away, it is—it is——"

Rosa stopped her excited walk.

"It isn't you? Who is it, then, Fräulein? You know and will tell me?"

"I know—yes. After a few days you shall be told."

"You mean soon to go away, Fräulein?"

"In the morning."

"You shall not go before you tell me where."

"I have to," Diana answered soothingly. "You'll hear from me almost immediately, Mrs. Kreppel. I'm sorry! I'll help you all that lies in my power. You believe it; don't you?"

Rosa resumed her walk.

"Yes, Fräulein, I believe you will help. I can not go till I know where you are going, Fräulein Vaughan."



"But I mustn't tell—not just yet. Don't you trust me?"

Rosa stood in an attitude of profound dejection. Her head sank forward on her chest.

"Trust?" The misery in her tone shrivelled what hope remained in Diana's heart. "Ach, ja, why should I not trust? To trust is so easy—so simple! You have but to say to yourself to have courage; that all is well with your man; that it is for the best he is gone from your arms and you do not know the place where he is taken; you must trust that it is good without knowing. You must not hope that he will ever come back to live with you. Does anybody else in North Harrow know where Kreppel is—anybody beside the Fräulein?"

"I know he has been taken to his father's house; Doctor Connelly and Doctor Howard know it," Diana said gently. "Doesn't that convince you that it is true?"

"Would Doctor Connelly and Doctor Howard tell where?"

"Later, they may. Not now."

Rosa lifted her head. She was facing Diana and but a few feet from her. A gleam lighted her miserable sunken eye.

"Why later, Fräulein? Why not now?" She persisted obstinately.

"Because, later, it will do no harm," Diana repeated with the utmost patience. "The excitement now might make him ill. He couldn't help being sorry for you; as sorry as—as I am."

"It would make Kreppel ill to hear of me—his wife!"

She flung her arms heavenward.

"But I have held him in these arms! His head has lain on this breast!

Passionately she struck herself.

"He has kissed this mouth and will, perhaps, believe it is I who left him, I who drove him away. Ach, Gott, you are not married so you don't know! How could you?"

Her voice dropped to a whisper.

"Fräulein Vaughan, is there no hope?"

Diana shook her head. She felt past speech, but managed wearily to say: "None. That is, no slightest hope as you understand it."

Rosa drew the back of her left hand across her forehead; her right she thrust inside her shirtwaist, as if clutching at her heart.

"Say it again," she commanded. "Tell me again that there is no hope. You are my man's adopted cousin. You love him only as the sister loves the brother—nothing else? Is not that what you tell me?"

"No—ye-es," Diana said, "except——" sobbing, she broke down, "I'm so, so sorry for you!"

"Ach, sorry! You? For me?"

With a magnificent sweep of the arm Rosa drew her hand from its shelter in her bosom; then, for a second time, flung both hands above her head.

"See! I am praying for you; to the Herr Gott for you," she said wildly. "I pray not to hurt you; not any one—only, I want my man back. If he is crazy I want to take care of him, to cure him. I want one little chance, but you will not give it. You will not tell the wife where he is. I am the wife and it is my right to be told. If I should hurt you I should never find out, and I will not hurt you. I

will be quite quiet and not hurt anybody. We were happy. Emil liked to be a waiter. The customers are good-natured. They did not mind his mistakes. He was not crazy then; he was only slow. Because he was a gentleman he could not learn good waiting. Because he was a gentleman he could not take orders straight to the kitchen without forgetting something. And all the time I was sure of what you tell me to-day—sure he was a gentleman; but we did not turn him out for that! I knew he was not bad, like the gentlemen who kiss girls not to marry if but to ruin them. He was never that kind—never! Do you think I would love him if he was?"

Diana, too, flung up her head, exulting.

"No!! I'm certain, Mrs. Kreppel, you wouldn't."

"Ach, you know! You know that, too, and you would take my man from me? It is not right, Fräulein, to take away my man."

Instantly her cunning returned and she let her arms fall to her sides.

"I will not hurt you. Do not believe that I will hurt you, Fräulein," she said. "I ask many, many times if you will not give me back my man. If I stay here to talk longer it will not help me? You know where he is, but I shall not have my man again? Talk till my tongue is withered, I can not make things different from what they are."

Diana could not speak. She bowed her head.

"Look up, Fräulein Vaughan. Do not look down to answer."

Diana looked up. She saw Rosa's eyes fiercely despairing while a smile played on her lips. Sadder than tears, it was, nevertheless, a smile and exultant, not mocking nor bitter. The German woman's at-

titude was majestic. Though her right hand was slipped into her shirtwaist over her heart, she seemed unconscious of anything theatric in the pose.

"You will not give me my man Kreppel?"

"I can not."

"You take him? You take not to give back to the wife who commands you? Then you are a thief. You shall not take him, Fräulein, you shall not."

The hand in her bosom stirred and she drew it forth. This time it was not empty. It held a pistol.

"You are a thief and I am the wife. You steal what you shall not keep to love. He is my man," she said.

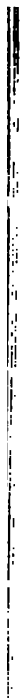
Neither woman heard the rattle of the doorknob. Gladys Marie was impatient to get in. She knew by the voices that there was a quarrel; but her hair was dressed, and she longed to show herself and to hurry Rosa Kreppel off, so she jerked open the door. Before Rosa could appreciate that another person was in the room, the girl had unconsciously stepped between them and was looking at Diana with a smile of triumph.

"There! Ain't I fixed finer'n silk?" she asked. "Whatcher say ter my hair now I've——"

The pistol fell to the floor and exploded; Gladys Marie dropped face downward and lay huddled at Diana's feet.



**HISTORY FOUR**  
**A DEBT OF HONOR**  
**XXIV————XXVII.**



*"The history of a man is his character . . .  
whosoever would transform a character must  
undo a life history."*—MAUDSLEY.





## CHAPTER XXIV.

### KREPPPEL'S SOLE EXECUTOR.

What happened on the days immediately following the shooting Diana did not know. Doctor Howard and Doctor Connelly were extraordinarily kind. She was shielded from all but the unavoidable tortures attendant on publicity and as soon as might be she was taken home, where her uncle, aunt Emma and Charlotte devotedly nursed her. But for George she would have been given over entirely to their care and have remained invalided, perhaps, for weeks. He, however, begged to be allowed to see her—insisted on it—and Diana was greatly impressed with the tone of the messages sent to her room. When Doctor Savidge permitted, Miss Vaughan went downstairs to the library for an interview with her impatient cousin.

George was standing at one of the windows, waiting with his back turned till she was comfortably settled and the servant left them together. Before a third person he could not trust himself to look at Diana nor to speak without emotion. His struggle for self-control on approaching the lounge where she lay stirred her to new feelings of respect. In the hospital she had not noticed any remarkable change; now she saw that the shock of tragedy had

fixed the transformation accomplished during sleep and that George Savidge was become not only himself again but very much a man.

Astonishment made her shove aside the cushions to attempt to sit upright.

"Don't, Diana! You're not strong enough. Stay as you were and let me talk," he begged. "All you have to do is to listen. I've made my plans. We must act, and act quickly. There's no slightest doubt of what we should do to save her."

"Save whom?"

"Mrs. Kreppel."

Diana shuddered, covering her face with her hands.

"The—the poor little victim, Gladys Marie? What became of her?" she asked. Did she suffer, or was she killed instantly?"

Savidge knelt by the lounge and put a reassuring arm around the girl's shoulders. Diana was sobbing.

"She wasn't killed. She's in the hospital, waiting to see you and getting well as fast as ever she can. Don't let your mind dwell on what can't be helped, dear. Good God, Di, that bullet was meant for you; it——" His voice broke. He could not finish the sentence.

"Where is your courage?" he asked after a moment.

"I haven't any—not a shred. Oh, I've made such a miserable, shameful failure of the whole business!"

He took her hands away from before her face and forced her to look at him.

"No, you haven't; for it wasn't your business. It was mine and I shirked it, Diana. But do you think

I intend sitting down to mourn like the weakling everybody has always thought me? I sha'n't. There is serious work to do. I've been insane, I suppose, and the unknown past can never be made quite clear; but I'm not afraid of it—not afraid that Kreppel, or any one like him, may come back out of the past. "If I've work to do, I haven't time to be insane."

He rose from his knees. With thoughtful, measured stride he paced the floor.

"My work, Diana, is to move heaven and earth to save that woman. When she fired the pistol she didn't know what she was about. Her behavior since in jail proves that she didn't. I am to blame. I drove her to desperation—innocently, if you will; but it would be criminal to-day for me or any other man in my position in full possession of his faculties to keep away from her and deny all responsibility for her act."

The ready color flamed in Diana's face. Her eyes shone. Enthusiastically she threw off the wraps over her feet, left the lounge, and joined Savidge in his steady tramping up and down the floor.

"What can you do?" She spoke eagerly. Invalidism was forgotten. You mustn't say that you're responsible, George. There is no Emil Kreppel, remember. He has ceased to exist."

"So you've told her, but the statement isn't exact. Forgive me, Di, dear! I'll make you see it in a moment. In claiming to be Kreppel's wife, the poor woman was right. She was Emil Kreppel's wife. The very words you've used so often declare the fact; for isn't saying that Kreppel has ceased to exist only another way of saying that he has existed?

He married Rosa Klein and lived with her innocently. He came into existence and passed out, quite innocent of any intentional wrongdoing. I am his sole executor. If you like to put it differently, I inherit Emil Kreppel's responsibilities and intend to assume them as a debt of honor."

Diana drew a long breath. George was capable of directing his affairs. The tonic told on her. It steadied the poise of her slim figure, as she stood in his path to arrest his walking, and it steadied her voice to speak naturally, with a sweet and sober dignity, giving pathos to the admission:

"I failed, George. I'm glad, though, you wouldn't let me stay upstairs breaking my heart, but called me to join you in a work that I simply could not do alone. I was too weak—too ignorant, so I spoil everything."

He broke into a sob, seizing her hands.

"You risked your life for me! But I mustn't think of any one now except Mrs. Kreppel. Help me not to think what I shouldn't, Diana! She is in prison, indicted for assault in the first degree. Diana, there is one man in all the world to help us. I'd have ransacked the world to get the best counsel, and he happens to be where I can lay a finger on him in New York—Alexander Coburn, the great lawyer, dad's friend."

"Are you sure? Have you spoken to uncle Will?"

Diana's color deepened. This strange new George, active, resourceful, determined to think and to do for himself, startled while he fascinated her.

"I didn't know Alexander Coburn was that kind of lawyer, George."

"He's the very best. In every branch of law he has distinguished himself, and it's what we want—a man, Diana, who rarely takes a criminal case but whose name as good as wins it. I'll have him up here. No matter what his fee is, he's to have all the conferences he wants with us and with the witnesses from North Harrow. You know the witnesses, so you'll help me. You'll fight side by side with me to save her?"

"I'll fight with you, side by side, and, if possible, we shall save her."

For a moment, Savidge stood with his head bowed and his arms folded on his chest. Then he raised his head, letting his arms fall, and squared his shoulders as if to adjust them to a weight that his strength rejoiced in being able to carry.

"Thanks, Di," he said simply. "I'm off. You'll hear from me on the instant that I've seen Coburn."

"Yes, George. Oh, uncle Will!" At the sound of Doctor Savidge's step Diana turned. "I'm so glad you've come! George is going."

"Dad knows."

George wrung his father's hand.

"I talked it over with dad before seeing you, Diana, and he approves my making a man of myself, so far as I can in behaving like one. You stay and confer with him, too. His judgment, I think, is pretty fair when he doesn't overrate us. Dad is inclined to believe in his children—in me, Diana."

George was gone. The old doctor waited, listening, every fibre of his body tense, till the music of the younger man's self-reliant step could no longer be heard. Then he looked at Diana, and his expression touched her more than words. She went

to him almost timidly, and put her arms around his neck.

"It's all right, uncle Will! He's a different George, but finer, stronger, bigger. We shall have to do exactly as he says in everything; for he knows his own mind, dear uncle. That's the difference."

Roughly the old doctor kissed and put her aside to pace the floor in an excitement greater than his son had shown.

"You're right," he said, with emotion. "George knows his own mind. He has grown up, Diana."

"It's—what shall we call it—a third personality, uncle Will?"

"Yes, dear—yes! At first, the dreamy, imaginative boy, young for his years on reaching manhood; then, the unfortunate Kreppel—dependent, gentle, teachable; but in brains and will a very young child; now, because he has gone forward since he woke a man and a gentleman, he has taken up his life to go on with it, Diana."

Diana interrupted:

"That's what he meant, then, by the queer thing he said to me just now. He——" She hesitated. The doctor sat down.

"Yes, dear? What queer thing did he say, Diana? Tell me. Go back to the lounge, child, and lie down. You're overtired. What did he say?"

Doctor Savidge's manner was professionally quiet, but his eyes searched hers.

"What did he say to you just now, Diana?"

"That because he has work to do he will put aside the past and not brood on it. He must save that poor woman. He said——"

Again she hesitated.

"Yes, dear?" The doctor encouraged her. "He said?"

"That having work to do he hasn't 'time' to be insane."

"Connelly's right—right! He's seen the boy and believes him. I'll help my son to do a man's work. The comfort is, dear, that whether I help or not he can work alone."

With chivalrous concern he looked at her.

"I'm sorry, child, that you have to go through with these legal proceedings."

"Perhaps, uncle, I, too, need work to develop me. I've taken my measure of weakness and mustn't lose time brooding on it. George needs us—in particular he needs me. You see, I know something of Rosa Klein's circle in North Harrow and can give an idea of how the people feel toward George and Rosa."

She went to sit on Doctor Savidge's knee, like a little girl, nestling her head against his shoulder.

"There's a poor fellow, Joe O'Connor, who feels responsible for the brawl in which George was hurt," she said. "He has the same blind passion for Rosa that she has for Emil Kreppel, and he'll be faithful to her till doomsday. It's a bulldog devotion so strong that it puts him into a class by himself. I want that man to see George as he is, uncle Will."

Doctor Savidge was troubled.

"Would it be safe, do you think? Isn't he George's enemy?"

"How can he be? Let him hear from George's lips what he intends doing for the woman O'Connor loves, and how he'll work to save her. The man couldn't believe it without hearing, any more than



without seeing he can believe that Emil Kreppel has become George Savidge. In my opinion, it is important that O'Connor should know George personally, uncle. Besides, he may be called as a witness."

"True."

"Then I shall communicate with him and arrange that he may see George? I may write, uncle?"

"Anything you like, my child—unless you'll wait till we've talked with Alec Coburn?"

"Oh, Mr. Coburn will need O'Connor anyhow and must see him! I wish the first interview to be between George and O'Connor without lawyers."

"Very well, Di."

"I'll go upstairs to write the letter."

"Be sure not to tire yourself," he said anxiously. "After a severe nervous shock it's easy to overdo and impossible for you to be so strong as before this thing happened."

"Dear uncle, I was weak before!"

He shook his head.

"Not physically, Diana."

"Well, morally, and that's worse, because rest doesn't cure it. As soon as I've written the letter I'll rest to please you."

"Do, dear child!"

He took up a book pretending, as she left him, to become absorbed in reading.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE CASE OF GEORGE SAVIDGE.

"Doctor Howard, sir."

"Come in, Howard. Glad to see you!" Doctor Connelly said hospitably.

For an awkward moment Howard stood on the threshold of the distinguished old physician's study to which he was shown by Doctor Connelly's house-keeper. He had timed his visit to find Doctor Connelly alone. Late in the evening, among his books, the old gentleman was enjoying a true bachelor's solitude—even to slippers and a pipe, which latter he removed from between his lips to say with testy kindness:

"Come in, young man, and shut the door. There's an abominable draught. Anything I can do for you?"

"If you're not too busy, doctor, I want to ask for 'points' in the Kreppel case," Howard said. "Of course, I know I can't qualify as an expert and that you'll be called in that capacity; but I may have to stand a pretty stiff cross-examination. The case interests me intensely and I wish to be 'up' in it—with regard to George Savidge's early life, I mean, before he became Emil Kreppel. Without violating professional confidence, and if it doesn't trouble you too much, will you tell me the story?"

Doctor Connelly refilled his pipe.

"My dear young friend, I'm quite willing to tell you all I know. Take a seat over there. Cigars are in a box in the left-hand top drawer of the book-case. No—the right hand; that's it! But if you have a pipe, smoke it; it's more sociable. Sit *down!*"

He shoved toward his guest an easy chair similar to that in which he himself was seated.

"At the moment you were announced," he said, "I was looking over my notes of the case of George Savidge, and, if you like, I'll read to you this remarkable history which I have written out in full, thinking that the time might come when it would be proper to disclose it. The time is not quite come, but I may, I think, properly give you this information for the present, at least, in confidence."

Howard's face kindled.

"If you do so, doctor, I shall be most grateful, and appreciate and respect your confidence," he said earnestly.

Adjusting his spectacles, Doctor Connelly read :

"My friend and former colleague, Doctor William Schofield Savidge, early in his professional life, married a young lady of German parentage, named Kreppel, the niece of a noted alienist.

"In 1883, at her instance, William Savidge went to Munich and there became interested in the study of mental diseases under the professor of psychiatry in the university.

"Having a competence and no special ties in the United States, he remained abroad for eight years.

"During the first year of his stay in Munich the subject of this history was born. The child was a bright, intelligent boy, of good physique, went to school in Munich, spoke German and little English.

"Two years later, a girl was born. She was simply like other girls, and her history is of no importance in connection with this record.

"After eight years, the family returned to the United States, and the father devoted himself to his home, to study and to the education of his children.

"English was the language of the family, and the children soon forgot their German.

"At about the age of twelve, the boy, George Savidge, began to have spells of a dreamy state, in which he talked and acted like a different person, spoke German only, and appeared not to understand English. After a few minutes, he returned rather slowly to his normal condition, was confused at first, but had no recollection of anything that had occurred during his 'dreamy' state. His father thought it wise not to question him about these 'spells,' which occurred four or five times a year, lasting for only five or ten minutes; but the boy was carefully watched and he was seldom left alone.

"The child was educated at home and made good progress in his studies.

"At the age of about eighteen these 'spells,' recurring from time to time, George began to walk in his sleep at night. He would get out of bed, dress himself and attempt to leave the house. On these occasions he would not answer to his name; but he talked sensibly enough, always in German. His father, however, speaking to him in German, could persuade him to go back to his room, undress and go to bed; but the boy did not recognize his father or his home, and talked as if he were a visitor and his father the host.

"At the age of about twenty, George developed a variety of fleeting and fantastic delusions. These were at first somewhat depressive; but they soon became expansive, cheerful and sometimes extravagantly hilarious. After a period, during which he imagined that he was despised and persecuted, heard voices jeering at him, accusing him of crimes and so forth, to which were added various grotesque and fantastic delusions, this active delusional state continuing for but a few days, he fell into a deep sleep lasting about twelve hours. When he woke he seemed rational. He said he had at first dreamed of frightful things, but afterward of supreme satisfaction and happiness. He soon returned to his former condition; namely, a quiet, thoughtful but seemingly rational state, with dreamy day-spells and frequent somnambulism. His parents alone knew of these delusional states, and they were able to conceal them from the younger members of the family and from even the servants. During the attacks by day and the sleep-walking his mind appeared clear and his talk was coherent, although he did not recognize his surroundings and spoke German only.

"After a few weeks he became anxious, depressed and irritable. He then developed a delusion that he had committed the unpardonable sin and that he inspired contempt and horror in the hearts of all men, but that his persecutions were deserved. He longed for death, but believed he was immortal. This period of active melancholia lasted for only a few hours. It was followed by a delusion that his limbs and internal organs were being gradually replaced by the parts of a normal man. So soon as

his heart should be thus transformed he would be able to overcome his enemies and live and die in peace. This idea gave him great satisfaction, and he became comparatively quiet; but the somnambulism occurred every night."

Doctor Connelly stopped. Again he filled his pipe to indulge in one or two long-drawn inhalations before continuing the reading, and young Howard ventured to say:

"And yet, Doctor, you believe the case cured? With well-defined serious delusions, such as you describe, is it possible that the delusions are not those of an incurable form of insanity?"

Into the old physician's eyes came an expression that to his dying day the younger man never forgot. It was the look of one who had attained wisdom through knowledge, great learning and wide experience. Howard understood why John Connelly's opinion was held in an esteem so high that it amounted to reverence by the members of the medical profession.

"The character of the delusions in this case," the old man said quietly, "is of first importance. Such delusions as I have described are not uncommon in acute melancholia and dementia præcox, conditions from which patients may recover; but in paranoia—which is incurable—the characteristic delusions are always consistent, coherent and logical, not fleeting and fantastic. Are you satisfied?"

Howard inclined his head. "Yes, doctor."

Doctor Connelly resumed the reading.

"His father, fearing suicide or violence, consulted me with the view of committing the boy to an asylum. My opinion was that the boy had suffered

since the age of twelve, from 'complete somnambulism, or ambulatory automatism,' commonly known as 'double consciousness,' and that later he had developed the paranoid form of dementia præcox, with highly exaggerated symptoms; that he might become dangerous to himself or others and should be put under restraint; that probably he would not recover. It was only too evident that the patient should at once be put under restraint, and that delay would be most dangerous. My diagnosis of dementia præcox was, however, provisional.

"While preparations for transfer to an asylum were in progress George disappeared, with but his ordinary clothing and a few dollars.

"Before communicating the news to me, even, with morbid horror of notoriety, Doctor Savidge searched for his son only in secret, sent detectives here to North Harrow and other places, following many false clues, till about nine weeks after George had disappeared, when his father received a letter from the North Harrow hospital, saying that a young man named Emil Kreppel had been received into the hospital suffering from concussion of the brain; that when he was convalescing from this trouble he had been taken with erysipelas and was at the point of death for several days; that one morning, when his recovery from the erysipelas was practically assured, he spoke English for the first time, denied that his name was Kreppel and said that he was George Savidge, the son of Doctor William Schofield Savidge, a well-known resident of Schofield Falls. On the receipt of this letter, corroborated by a telephone message from the hospital, Doctor Savidge, accompanied by Miss Vaughan,

came to North Harrow and went at once to the hospital, where I met them. George immediately recognized us. He said that he did not know how he came to be in the hospital or why he had been called Emil Kreppel. There must have been some mistake. Possibly, he had been taken suddenly ill. He wished to go home as soon as he was able to travel. He said that a German woman had mistaken him for her husband and tried to talk with him in German. He thought she must be out of her mind and a patient in the hospital. His physician and the nurses, when he asked about the woman, gave him no satisfaction. It was all very queer and incomprehensible to him."

The reading came to an end. Soberly the great alienist crossed the room to lock away his notes in a drawer of the cabinet from which he had taken them, and Howard realized that it was time to say good night. He rose to go.

"I thank you, Doctor Connelly, more than I can say. Later, many things will come out; facts of which, at present, I suppose it's wisest to say absolutely nothing. Do you know that George Savidge is planning the conduct of the defence in the event of the case coming to trial?"

"George personally retains Alexander S. Coburn," Doctor Connelly answered. "Doctor Savidge tells me that his son is arranging for the conferences necessary to prepare the defence, that, if required, every penny of the young man's private fortune will be expended to clear Rosa Klein from the charge of assault with intent to kill. Afterward, it will be proper to annul the marriage. George has undertaken a great task to rehabilitate an unfortunate



woman; but whether or not he succeeds in freeing her, by the use of his mental powers in a noble effort he will have freed himself. 'For what is a man profited,' " the old physician quoted solemnly, " 'if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' In the recovery of his reason I verily believe George's soul has found itself. Good night, Howard."

"Good night, Doctor Connelly, and again many, many thanks!"

Howard went thoughtfully out.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### JOE IS FORGIVEN.

He had gone but a dozen steps along the street when he was jostled by the careless elbow of a man slouching past, hands in pockets, shoulders hunched up to his ears, his burly figure allowing scant room for other than himself on the sidewalk.

"Hullo!" Howard said sharply. "Mind where you're going, my good fellow! What d'ye mean, knocking against a passerby like that?"

"Mean? Nuthin'. Whatcher doin' yesilf out at this time o' night?"

Howard stopped, astonished.

"Why, it's O'Connor! How do you happen to be here, Joe?"

The doctor's eye was caught by a gloomy building, looming black on the next block that it occupied in full, and he recognized the jail. He swallowed a lump in his throat before saying:

"So that's the particular block you patrol, eh? I wouldn't do it, Joe. It doesn't do you any good, and, what's worse, it's of no slightest help to her."

"I know I ain't any good," O'Connor sneered, "ye needn't go ter rubbin' it in! Nor ye needn't tell me I ain't helpin' her. Do ye s'pose she's looked at the likes o' me or slung a feller a friendly word sence the shootin'? Ye don't know Rosa! Nobody knows Rosa an' what she's suffered, an' understood from A ter Z—exceptin' only me as ain't doin' her any good."

"Come on! You mustn't hang round all night."

The young doctor's voice was as gruff as O'Connor's. He was ashamed to show emotion.

"Don't be a fool, Joe! Her case is in the best possible hands. I understand that George Savidge has engaged the greatest lawyer in the State. If anybody can help Rosa, Alexander Coburn is the man."

"Ye mean him as was Kreppel is ter put up the cash?"

"Exactly."

Joe's breath came hard. He was laboring under intense excitement.

"In that case," he said, "this 'ere letter from Miss Diana Vaughan, doctor, is the gen-oo-ine article."

He opened his big fist to disclose a moist and crumpled wad of paper which he smoothed for Howard to read by the light of a street lamp.

"The gen-oo-ine article an' no mistake!" Joe repeated. "She wants me ter drive over fer ter see Mr. George Savidge—him as was Kreppel. I ain't doin' no good eatin' out me blamed heart in this 'ere town, wid Klein blubberin', gone all ter pieces, an' Rosa in jail, refusin' ter speak ter me, while p'raps there's somethin' doin' at th' other end o' the line. I'll go if ye say so, doctor."

"Go, by all means! You may be called in the case as a witness. Better see the Savidge family to give them every help in your power," Howard said.

"It's yer advice, doctor? I'm sure I'm much obleeged ter ye."

"You'd like to see young Savidge; wouldn't you?" Howard asked interested.

O'Connor blushed.

"Seein's believin'. If Kreppel's sure enough turned gintleman I'd be glad ter see it." He sneered to cover his sheepishness.

They had by this time walked as far as O'Connor's stable and Joe pulled up short at his office door.

"Will he know me, d'ye think, doctor?"

"Who? Savidge? I think not. If he should recognize you I should be pleased to be told," Howard answered dryly. "When do you go over?"

"Early ter-morrer. I've a mare who'll do the eighteen miles easy."

Early next morning O'Connor hitched the mare to a light wagon and drove over to Schofield Falls. The animal was skittish, and at every motor they met on the road she shied. Controlling her did Joe good, so that both he and the mare were reasonably calm when O'Connor turned in at the gateway of Doctor Savidge's estate. Miss Vaughan was on the terrace before the house, watching for him.

"How do you do, Mr. O'Connor. Stanton will take your horse," she said. "What a beauty!"

Mechanically Joe stepped from his "rig," where he was comparatively at ease, to follow Miss Vaughan into the fine big house, where a sensation of suffocating misery at once caught his throat. Diana brought back the memory of the day on which she had called at the stable. She looked, Joe thought, more frail, and she was without her hat with the sweeping plumes; but her voice, her graceful walk, were the same. Joe would have known her anywhere.

"Mr. Savidge and I will talk to you in this small room apart from the library," she explained, "and

afterward we shall join my uncle and Mr. Coburn for the conference. George, this is Mr. Joseph O'Connor, of North Harrow. He knows poor Mrs. Kreppel."

Sweat beaded O'Connor's forehead. Here was Kreppel truly—Kreppel in the flesh! With different bearing and quite another expression, Kreppel's body-envelope was, however, so permeated by George Savidge's resolute new spirit that Joe succumbed as to a charm.

"Ye know me, doncher, Mr. Savidge?" he asked awkwardly. "I'd ha' knowed ye fer Kreppel anywheres—an' agin I—I wouldn't."

The humble witness to the miracle took out his handkerchief. He mopped head and face—even to his thick red throat, encircled by its wilted collar. Savidge had no recollection of having laid eyes on the man. But he would not say that he remembered or could not remember him. More important matters were at stake.

"Sit down, Mr. O'Connor. We're to talk for a few moments," George said gravely, and he brought forward a chair for Miss Vaughan also. "Sit down, please, Diana. Thank you!"

"Mr. O'Connor, you recognize me, you say, and I accept the statement; but you shall not find me the helpless human being whom you knew as Kreppel. I've invited you here for a purpose. Rosa Klein must be saved. We can do it—you, I, Miss Vaughan and other important witnesses, guided, as we shall be, by Mr. Alexander Coburn, who consents to take the case. Mr. Coburn has several questions to ask. I'll take you to him after a little. First, let me declare to you that there is no doubt

in any one's mind but that we shall succeed in saving her, and when cleared of the charge of murderous assault she must be as free as before Emil Kreppel entered her life."

The hope dawning in Joe's eyes unmanned Savidge. He appealed to Diana.

"You know Mr. O'Connor. Tell him, please, Di, how Coburn explains what is to be done."

Diana leaned forward eagerly in her chair.

"Mr. Coburn says that when Doctor Savidge and Doctor Connelly prove to the court's satisfaction Mr. George Savidge's mental condition at the time of the ceremony, the marriage between Rosa Klein and Emil Kreppel will be declared void. Mr. Savidge owes it to Rosa Klein to prove that he himself was not competent to contract a marriage with her."

"Gawd A'mighty! Gawd A'mighty!"

Joe's big body swayed. The news was too much to be borne. Then came the relief of tears, and he sobbed like a woman.

"There ain't no mistake—no mistake at all?"

He got to his feet.

"Whin ye was Emil Kreppel, sir, I let 'em play ye a purty dirty trick. The night ye was tuk off in th' ambulance ter North Harrar hospital; d'ye remember?"

"No," Savidge said quietly, "I do not remember."

He was putting tremendous restrain on himself not to show impatience. The conference should not be delayed. Why did Diana wish him to interview this man when everything might and should be said by O'Connor before others in the library?

"Fer bettern'n fer wuss, before the weddin' I loved Rosa Klein stiddy, an' if wuss'n this kin come

—well, let it! I ain't th' sort ter shirk. But I've done wrong ter ye, Mr. Savidge, an' it's me dooty ter apologize."

He walked up to George and extended his hand.

"Will ye shake wid me, sir?"

"I will. But what is it all about? I haven't any grudge against you, O'Connor."

Diana hastily opened the door leading to the library.

"Will you come to the conference, please? We shouldn't," she said, "keep Mr. Coburn and uncle waiting any longer."

Gratitude leapt from George's eyes, rewarding her for the interruption. He shot her but one look; then devoted himself to O'Connor. Doctor Savidge and the distinguished lawyer were at the further end of the room, talking together earnestly, when the three entered, and on a sudden George understood something of what the conference might bring. Diana introduced O'Connor for a purpose. The liveryman had known him as Kreppel. Somehow, O'Connor and Kreppel must have quarreled in that blind past which George Savidge should make every effort to redeem, and Diana trusted him to take a daring backward leap into the dark. Only Diana could so have trusted. His courage responded to the confidence she placed in him.

"Mr. Coburn," he said, "and father, this is Mr. O'Connor, of North Harrow, before whom I wish to outline our plan for Rosa Klein's, or Rosa Kreppel's, defence. Mr. O'Connor is her lifelong friend. He is, therefore, entitled to hear what we intend doing. Be seated, please, Mr. O'Connor."

Joe sat down.

Young Savidge turned to Alexander Coburn.

"May I explain in my own way?" he asked. "It will be, perhaps, explaining—myself. Mr. O'Connor, you see, knows me only as Emil Kreppel, and it will help the case to have him learn from my lips what George Savidge can do. Better, even, than to have him told by a lawyer."

"It is," Coburn agreed, "much better."

The four fixed their eyes on George. In the absorption of watching him they scarcely drew breath but were affected by widely different emotions.

"You may know, Mr. O'Connor, the young man went on calmly, "that Gladys Marie Doane is out of danger—is, in fact, almost recovered. Our first step is to have Rosa Klein released on bail. She should be free to go to her own home to wait till her case is called. Miss Vaughan will see Miss Doane at the hospital, will give her sworn affidavit as well as Miss Doane's, to withdraw the charge of assault. It is a simple matter to find the necessary bail for Mrs. Kreppel. I've made arrangements for it, Mr. O'Connor."

Joe lurched in getting to his feet.

"No, *sir!* No, Mr. Savide, sir. I do it," he said.

He cleared his throat.

"My stable is wuth ten thousand dollars, sir, clear o' incumbrances. They wouldn't want me ter put up more?"

"Five thousand will be enough," Mr. Coburn said.

"But——" George was beginning.

"Let the man do it," the lawyer broke in testily. "You say he's an old friend of the prisoner."



"Thank ye, sir Thank ye kindly! Ye see, it was me who got inter the row wid ye that night, Mr. Savidge, sir, and' it's me as is ter blame fer all th' trouble. I'm sure I'm much obleeged ter ye fer yer offer o' the money, but it's fittin' fer me ter go Rosa's bail, an' no other man, sir."

If ever man spoke from his heart, carrying conviction, it was O'Connor. Tears of sympathy welled to Diana's eyes. Mr. Coburn plunged with George into a discussion of Rosa's case, bringing before O'Connor point after point, till Joe's brain ached from the unusual effort to follow a consecutive line of thought. After the conference Joe got back into his "rig" and drove slowly in the direction of North Harrow. His mind was in a tumult. The little mare knew the way home and he let her take it. Gradually his confusion cleared away. With the fresh air blowing in his face, the familiar road stretching ahead, and the reins in his hands, he was better able to think. Rosa would be saved. Of the talk in the library that much he understood. How her release was to be brought about he could not tell, but he had a qualified faith in lawyers. Money could buy the best, he reasoned, and money was to be abundantly forthcoming. He could not doubt the ability of the men to whom he had listened; they would save Rosa. The conference impressed him. Adding thereto the evidence of his senses, he understood all that he needed. He could see that George Savidge both was and was not the lost Kreppel. He could see that Miss Vaughan was Rosa's friend. Indeed, she was willing to testify to save her. What jury in the world would convict Rosa?

Joe heaved an enormous sigh. His heart beat,

then, so suffocatingly that it almost choked him. If he went to the prison with the news he had to bring, would Rosa speak? He had invented a thousand clumsy pretexts to visit her regularly. On no occasion had she paid any attention to him. Her anger was easier to bear than her indifference. Didn't she want to be set free? Couldn't she forgive his part in her trouble? Did she know that he sympathized, that he understood what she had done?

He flicked the mare with the whip, and the animal darted forward, as eager as Joe to be in North Harrow. It was too late now for admittance at the jail, but in the morning——.

In the morning, at the visitors' hour O'Connor was allowed to see the prisoner. Instantly he plunged into the matter of his errand. With the old Rosa, directness he knew was the only method.

"Ain't ye goin' ter look at me or throw me a word?" he asked her. "Listen, my girl. The law won't be hard on ye. The best lawyer in the State they've got fer ter fight for ye—Alexander Coburn. Ye'll win."

With quiet clear eyes and a tragic impassivity of feature she heard, not caring. Joe rushed on:

"Say somethin'—anythin', ter me," he pleaded. "Ye've no call fer ter feel friendly, an' I don't ask ye fer nothin'—only ter fergive me! All the trouble come through me not stoppin' it in the fust place, Rosa. It was me that had yer man Kreppel took ter th' hospital."

"Ja," Rosa said.

She looked at him strangely, as if wondering why tears flooded his cheeks.

"Oh, say anythin' ye like, darlin'," he cried despairingly. "Fer Gawd's sake, don't take it so quiet! De ye hate me, Rosa?"

"Nein. I do not hate you."

"D'ye mourn fer yer man Kreppel, an' are ye breakin' yer heart, me girl, wid no livin' soul ter give a morsel o' comfort? Sure, I don't ask nothin' but ter be friends wid ye, Rosa. D'ye love him so, darlin'? D'ye love him an' want him back?"

He choked down a sob.

"D'ye love him?" he asked again. "D'ye love? If ye do, jest tell me." Timidly he held out his hand.

Something in his distress touched the woman, and she placed her hand in his.

"Gawd A'mighty! Gawd A'mighty! Does yer hand mean ye'll fergive me, Rosa?"

He straightened himself.

"I won't trouble ye no more about me own feelin's," he said. His face was blotched red and white, and his voice trembled. "Gawd'll be me witness that ye'll have no more troubles through me. I'll stan' yer friend, remimber. An' I'll be standin' and a-standin, till the end o' time, whin, p'raps, ye'll want some'un ter do somethin' ter be useful ter ye. Ye'll ask it o' me, won't ye, Rosa? An' by the askin' ye'll show ye fergive me?"

"I forgive," Rosa said gently. "I forgive, and I'm sorry, Joe."

"Gawd A'mighty! Gawd A'mighty!"

O'Connor bowed his head. Without another word he left her. He asked nothing but peace of heart for the woman he loved, and his days were to be consecrated to obtaining it.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### ROSA HAS HER WISH.

When Rosa was released she went home to brood, as rebellious as before at the loss of her man. Joe then made the supreme sacrifice of self in love; he went to her quite frankly and told that he knew where Kreppel was.

"Ye'll have him agin. Anythin' ye want," he vowed with grimness, "yer a-goin' ter have while the breath's in me body ter bring it about fer ye. I'll take ye ter see yer man Kreppel. It's different he is, sure enough; but if ye want him, I say, yer ter have him—gintleman or no gintleman."

The fierceness of thwarted passion flamed again in Rosa's face.

"You know where Kreppel is and you'll take me to him?" she said panting. "There's nobody ever told me that but you, Joe. Ach, you are my friend—my friend! When do we go?"

"No time like the prisint! That Dutch girl ye got in th'restaurant kin cook alone fer a day, I guess. I'll hitch up the mare an' we'll drive over."

Rosa did not ask where they were going. Her type of mind rarely questions. She followed instinct in trusting Joe. He was one of her kind. His passions were as strong as hers; he could resent injustice; fight for what he wanted; was loyal to primitive animal impulse; true to her because born true; while the influence she had over him made him

willing to immolate his love and give her Kreppel. In the human animal devotion can mount no higher.

The impression that George Savidge made on Joe at the conference lasted for only so long as it had taken O'Connor to arrange the business details of going on Rosa's bond. He had no doubt but that on the instant Rosa should confront the young man, George Savidge would again become Emil Kreppel, would again follow meekly where Rosa led. Miracles might wreck O'Connor's personal joy in life; he accepted them. The one had robbed Rosa of her man; another of the same sort, a reversion of the first miracle, would give Rosa back her man again, and Rosa said that she wanted him.

Few words passed between the two on their drive to Schofield Falls. Doctor Savidge was alone in his library. From his windows he saw them coming, and he sent a servant to admit them at once. Then he closed the door against intruders.

"Did you come to see my son?" he asked the woman sternly. He might pity Rosa; he could not forgive her. The tragedy and all the offensive publicity surrounding it were due to her act in hiding George and deceiving the men who went first to North Harrow as to the nearest place to find him.

She felt his antagonism.

"Nein," said she shortly, "I have come for my man. I do not ask for your son. I want Kreppel."

The old gentleman wheeled round in his desk-chair to confront her.

"You hid my son—stole him, took him from his home when he was helpless, and tricked those looking for him. In your hands my son was a child, but he is a child no longer. He is returned to me

by a miracle. You are to blame—not for what you can not understand, but for what you did in the beginning, concealing him, giving yourself over to an infatuation. I doubt if it is best to allow you to see my son, and I shall not.”

Joe made an angry motion to speak. Rosa’s hand stayed him. “Nein, let me answer, Joe.

“Did I come to this house for your son? I did not. Kreppel came to the restaurant. Kreppel asked us to give him food and work. He had no home. He did not have a father. He had no friends. If he is your son why didn’t you keep him? I did, till the hospital took him away when he was hurt, and I behaved right and let him go; but I was with him at the hospital. Rosa did not leave him there alone to suffer. Rosa was with him every day till you told them not to let her in, and you stole Kreppel from her. My Emil would not live in this house; it is too big, too fine for him. He is not your son.”

Doctor Savidge bowed his head. Under the stress of passion this woman showed ability to reason, to dig into the heart of things and bring forth proof that he had wronged her and his son. He had sacrificed his son to family pride. He should not have kept George’s illness in adolescence a secret, when by following Doctor Connelly’s advice he might earlier have cured the boy. He should have published his loss to the world, in order that no one might hide his son and no woman love and care for him ignorantly, precipitating a tragedy. Yes, he was to blame, and publicity in one of its cruellest forms was his punishment. But he had his boy.

George was safe and George was cured. He lifted his grey head.

"If you wish," he said gently, "you may see my son. George is coming, I hear his step. He would, I think, prefer to see you," and he opened the door for George coming along the hall.

"You here, dad? I wanted you. A-hhh!"

Rosa was always an imposing woman. Her parlor, with the startled eyes searching in vain for what she looked at him a trifle wildly to see, made her personality the more impressive to George Savidge. The event that he dreaded was this meeting with Kreppel's wife; for, like Rosa, he had imagined that he would remember her. Pity, not recollection, now stirred him. They faced each other, this man and this woman whom man had innocently joined together and God had put asunder, and they realized that they were indeed strangers.

"I'm glad you're here," the young fellow said impulsively, striding toward her. "You must have thought me a stock and a stone. I am not Kreppel, but it wasn't a dream; for I owe you my life and I mean to pay."

She lifted, then let fall, her hands, staring at him blankly. Her carriage was still superb because natural; but the expression of her face was that of a dismayed child.

"There's nothing to pay," she told him. "I want nothing."

"'A life for a life.' Don't you call that a debt?" he flashed back at her. "I can't remember, God forgive me! But neither can I forget. I've learned what you did for Kreppel; know that but for you he might have starved; but for you he would sooner

or later have been killed in some drunken brawl; but for you he would have wandered elsewhere and I might never have come back to take his place. I shall do his work in caring for you, and in helping you I may redeem his memory."

The speech and manner of it—quick leaping thoughts surcharged with a man's emotion on lips that were once the childish Kreppel's—overcame Rosa so that her obsession wavered. Instinctively she plucked at O'Connor's coat sleeve. Him she could understand.

"D'ye want yer man so bad yit, Rosa?" Joe asked, piteously ignorant of the reason for the appealing contact of her fingers.

"You shall be properly defended," George rushed on, with the vehemence of hot youth righting a wrong. "The little girl who was shot bears no malice. You know, of course, that Miss Vaughan is your friend and understands with me how you were goaded to resent her interference between you and the man you considered to be your husband—goaded to the breaking point; it's patent to anybody. Good God, what wouldn't I give to undo the horrible suffering I have caused!"

He turned to Joe.

"Help us, O'Connor! You know her best, so comfort her. Coburn, whom you saw here the other day, went with you into the details of the fight we intend putting up. Tell Mrs. Kreppel that it's a strong case."—He could not call Rosa other than Mrs. Kreppel—"We have Miss Vaughan's affidavit, withdrawing the charge of assault; Gladys Marie Doane's affidavit to the same effect. Nobody wishes for anything but a vindication."



The turn affairs were taking frightened O'Connor for the woman.

"Will ye go back home agin, Rosa?" His voice was husky and it trembled. He need not have been alarmed.

"Ja," Rosa said, "I will go. Ja, ja! Come, Joe."

Before stirring, however, she made one more attempt to regain Kreppel. She spoke below her breath, in the childish German that her man knew and no one else could understand, a few love-words—a "little language" of infinite pathos, foolish, fond, that a German mother might have crooned to the infant at her breast. Emil would have answered her in kind; George Savidge could not. Then Rosa bowed her head. She was beaten and acknowledged it.

For companionship she moved still closer to O'Connor's side. He was the only thing not alien to her in that strange, luxurious room, where the man who had been Kreppel moved at ease, encompassed by walls of innumerable books that it awed even Rosa's spirit to see gathered under the roof of a private house. She wanted to be back in her environment in Klein's restaurant, without Kreppel, till she should decide what was to be her future relation with this stranger in Kreppel's image. Shaken, she wanted time to get command of herself.

George accompanied her and O'Connor courteously to the door, saw Stanton bring round Joe's mare, saw Rosa and Joe depart as they had come, and went back again to the library, with his sinews strengthened to do battle for the woman. Doctor Savidge was no longer there, but there Diana found George when she returned from her visit to Gladys Marie in the hospital.

"Is it all right, Di? Did you have a talk with the little Doane girl and not excite her?" Savidge asked. He said nothing of Rosa's visit.

Diana pulled out her hatpins and tossed her hat to the lounge before she seated herself; then drew off her long white gloves, meditatively smoothing their creases while she answered:

"Yes—oh, yes! It's all right, certainly! We knew it would be. Mr. Coburn stayed in the corridor, outside the ward, with Doctor Howard, and let me go in alone. The child was much excited. There's everything in the point of view, you know. It hadn't occurred to me she'd be proud of being shot."

"Proud of it?"

"Why, yes! In imagination she is one dime-novel heroine and I'm another. She feels no resentment toward Rosa; rather, she's indebted to her—if she thinks of her at all."

"Is she as shallow as all that?" George was disgusted. This unlooked-for news too quickly followed his interview with the principals of the tragedy.

"Shallow? Let me see."

Diana crossed her right knee over the left and rested her elbow on it, with her chin in the palm of her hand. "We're accused of being shallow, we women, till we're plumbed by suffering. Gladys Marie has the normal imagination of the child. She is acting a part, George; living in it, as we grown people—except the great actors—never do. Charmed with everything offered her, she is delighted with the affidavit, even, which she proudly signed. Poor

little thing! She asks a special reward of me, George."

The young man's brows drew into a frown. "What does she want?"

"My hat," Diana answered dreamily. "One like it, I mean. I promised her."

Miss Vaughan's imagination drifted backward to the room in North Harrow House, where she saw again the scrubby little chambermaid-waitress, representative of the eternal feminine craving for personal adornment, and her heart warmed with a sympathy such as George was feeling for Rosa's eternal femininity that craved to be allowed to cherish the abnormal being who was to her both husband and child. Would not, he prayed, the All-Merciful Father give Rosa another chance and satisfy a hunger of poor tortured human nature? The mistake was not Rosa's own, and the test of Savidge's manhood was to strike off the fetters with which Emil Kreppel chained Rosa Kreppel—the test of his new manhood.

Diana stood up.

"I must go," said she softly, touched by something she could not read in the young man's expression. "In the end, things will come right, George. We mustn't fear, mustn't waver. Meanwhile, Gladys Marie shall have her hat; for, like Figaro, we 'laugh in order that we may not weep.' We'll face the music, dear, sha'n't we?"

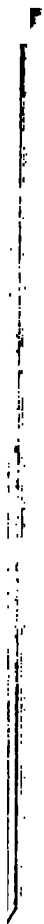
He stood, and at her words moved to open the door for her. Smiling, he squared his shoulders, sighed; then, with a laugh, threw back his head.

"Face the music? Yes, Di, and, if necessary, we'll make it, too."

**EPILOGUE**  
**XXVIII.**



*"The primary self alone possesses true personality, will, and self-control. The primary self alone is a law unto itself—a person having the power to investigate his own nature, to discover faults, to create ideals, to strive after them, to struggle for them, and by continuous, strenuous effort of will to attain higher and higher stages of personality."*—SIDIS.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### MOTHER AND SON—SANCTUARY.

Mrs. Savidge lifted her head from the pillows, straining to catch the sound of a footfall. By now the day's ordeal must be over and at any moment her husband, her son and Diana would bring news. She chose to wait for them quite alone. Her maid was within call, but remained tactfully out of immediate sight and hearing. Often the invalid would lie for hours thus alone in the dusk, listening for Diana's quick light tread, for Doctor Savidge's older step; heavier, firmer, though sometimes dragging despondently—his wife would know it among thousands as she would know George's—their son's. Persons in health can not appreciate the accuracy with which the sick read, step by step, as it were, the emotions of those around them, and the often intolerable strain on the sick of the anticipation of good or evil as footsteps draw near bringing good or bad news. At last, Mrs. Savidge heard the motor-car arrive before the house, her husband, George and Diana pass indoors, recognizing George's footfall as that which had belonged to him for the past few weeks—the vigorously young, elastic step of a man in the fullness of life, with full knowledge of the part in life that he was cast to play.



At her door the step paused, George's voice said :  
"Mother?"

Mrs. Savidge tried to answer, "Come in," but could not. Confidently George turned the doorknob and walked in.

"You're alone, mother, aren't you?"

"Yes, dear."

She lay limp. A flickering color in cheeks and lips intensified her pallor. "You've won? You've saved her? Oh, my son, my son, my little boy!"

He looked and felt so entirely the man that he laughed at her term of endearment. Tears started, then, to his eyes and he went straight to her couch, seated himself on a footstool beside her, and laid his head on his mother's breast, like a little boy.

"Yes, mother, we've won and I've come to tell you."

"About the trial?"

"There was no trial."

"You mean——?"

"We've won absolutely. It happened as Coburn thought. There was no case against Rosa Klein or Rosa Kreppel, so the indictment is dismissed."

"But, George——"

"The excitement of hearing the details isn't going to be so bad for you as suspense, mother; as guessing—half-knowledge, even. Don't tremble, dear."

His steady tone so soothed her that she stopped trembling. He had raised his head and was looking directly at her with shining eyes. There was power in the hands holding hers—power to quiet as well as to hold fast those who needed him.

She drew breath.

"How did it happen? I wish to be told, George."

"You shall be.

"All along Coburn has said, mother, he could prove that the people had no case. Every opportunity was given the Court and the district attorney to study our affidavits and to examine Mrs. Kreppel. Doctor Howard testified and was cross-examined, Doctor Connelly, then, was put on the stand."

George hesitated.

"Doctor Connelly's testimony, mother, I think, settled it. Doctor Howard had already made clear Mrs. Kreppel's delirium, her mental irresponsibility when she armed herself with the pistol and went to the hotel, and when she dropped it and it exploded at the time the little chambermaid burst into the room, and her pitiable condition immediately after the shooting and, later, in the prison hospital, with her gradual return to normal consciousness."

"But, George—you? What of you?" The mother averted her eyes. Again she was trembling. "You sat there and heard these things? Did they speak in particular of—you?"

"Yes, mother." His steadiness quieted her again. "It was the only thing I could do—the only square thing—to sit up and take my medicine. There was Diana ready to be called as a witness. There was dad—poor dad! There were friends of Mrs. Kreppel, and with her an old man, pitifully gone to pieces, who, I was told, is her father."

Mrs. Savidge hid her face in her hands.

"Did Doctor Connelly—— What was said of you?"

"Doctor Connelly gave the history of my case. How would you have felt if I hadn't been man enough to hear him? Mother!"

She was crying. He took her hands gently away from before her face and with yearning tenderness kissed her several times.

"The district attorney began by being aggressive. It was his duty, you know, to get at the truth for the people, and, in addition, there was a strong prejudice against 'the distinguished lawyer from New York,' and the strongest possible feeling against me—Kreppel. Can you blame them? To the people I was Kreppel, pretending to be somebody else, and they were for Rosa against me and couldn't see how I could be for Rosa, too."

"Cruel! I wish——"

He stopped her with another kiss.

"The district attorney's speech wouldn't have pleased you; we'll admit so much! He's a man of the people, common and uneducated, but he did his duty. What if he enjoyed it? Why shouldn't he? I have long arrears to make good, and can take a few hard knocks in learning that the stuff I'm made of, mother, isn't all dream-stuff. I can't go on in a dream. There are things a man may say to his mother and to no one else on earth. I'll say them to you. May I?"

She dried her eyes. Her spirit caught fire from him and smiled. "You may; I'm listening."

"I'll go ahead, then, and make a clean breast of it. In the beginning, mother, I was in agony and wanted to cut and run. Every soul in the room was staring at me. They nudged one another. 'Git on ter Kreppel! It's him, I tell yer! Look! Look!' The place was jammed full of a hostile crowd jeering at me as loudly as they dared in court, and longing to jeer more openly. I looked at Diana. Oh,

mother, Di gave me courage! Her answering look called to mind what she'd said the other day about facing the music, and it acted on me like a tonic. Then I looked from Diana to—to Kreppel's wife—who met my eyes much as Diana had. Something told me that while all her world was speaking of me as the living Kreppel, she knew better. As far as she was concerned, the struggle was over. So might a woman look dry-eyed on her dead, realizing that it was necessary to take up life without him. Her look set me free. Do you understand? It identified me as George Savidge."

"Yes, my son, I—I think I understand."

"After that, the staring crowd meant nothing to me. It didn't matter whether they thought I was Kreppel or Savidge—the woman *knew*! And it didn't matter how she knew—what had brought about the change in her. She was to hear my history from Doctor Connelly, and when the moment came he didn't omit a detail. Don't wince. It got her off, mother."

He walked the floor.

"The indictment was dismissed, the defendant 'honorably discharged with the congratulations of the court.' You can't imagine the scene! Men and women hugged and kissed one another, wept, cheered, shouted, struggled stampeding for the doors. Only Joe O'Connor, with head lowered like a bull's, swung his huge arms and fought for space silently. Past Doctor Connelly, dad and me, past Coburn and Diana, shouldering and elbowing, he worked his way toward Rosa. His face ran with tears. Nobody tried to stop him, to speak to him; he saw nobody."

George came back to his mother's couch.

"My sympathies are with the woman; Diana's are, too. You must sympathize, must understand, and dad must. Don't you see, mother, that I had to offer up my past? What's my future worth if that skeleton isn't dragged from the closet and gibbeted in the eyes of the people? Let 'em see! Let 'em have it! Too many a man's future is bound up with his past. We shouldn't keep a secret after it has so affected other people's lives that we lose the right to privacy. I've been sheltered for too long—— No, no, mother, I'm not reproaching you and dad! I'm assuming the responsibility of my future, and the past happens not to belong to me at all. That's the tragic difference between me and other men. It wasn't the family skeleton, it was mine; and I've taken it from the closet because the skeleton had belonged to me.

He got command of himself and more calmly went on.

"Don't you see, mother, that now we're rid of it forever I've a clean bill of health? As the past didn't entirely belong to me I hadn't the power to live it down; for it wouldn't 'down.' Part belonged to Rosa Kreppel, and the whole was needed to explain the part. The whole is gone. It has served its turn and been put away."

He knelt beside her, and she stretched out thin invalid hands as if to shield him from the world. He held them to his lips and kissed them.

"I'm young and strong and have a future, but I haven't a secret on earth," he said. "Is that why you're crying, mother?"

"I'm not crying. The tears are running over only

because I've held them back for so long. The skeleton was mine, too. You can't wrench your past entirely from your mother."

In sudden remorse he flung his arms around her and held her close.

"You're worn out—not fit for another word! This is what I'll do," he cried. "I'll get Coburn to give us a copy of the proceedings from the official record and you may read everything that took place. It's down in black and white. After to-day we sha'n't speak of it; you'll read what you wish—or, if you like, mother—I'll——"

Diana was calling:

"George! George! Where are you?"

Savidge's arms relaxed. Mechanically he drew away from his mother and she could see the blood rush to his forehead. Then he seized her, held her closer than before, and with his burning young cheek against her face, the poet in him—thinker and poet—whispered:

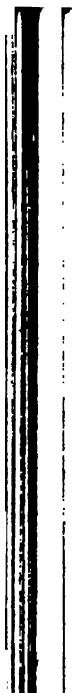
"That's the question! It may take years to answer—years to make myself over into the man I intend to be. Mother, mother, where am I?"

She caught fire from him.

"At the beginning. But you will come into your own. I am no longer afraid for you, my son," proudly she said.

END.

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